PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

JULY-AUGUST, 1942

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The British Crisis

W. H. AUDEN
The Rewards of Patience

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Some People in Paris

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At the Foot of the Page

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PARTISAN REVIEW

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The British Crisis

A Letter from London

George Orwell

When I last wrote to you things had begun to go wrong in the Far East but nothing was happening politically. Now, I am fairly certain, we are on the edge of the political crisis which I have been expecting for the better part of two years. The situation is very complicated and I dare say that even before this reaches you much will have happened to falsify my predictions, but I will make the best analysis I can.

The basic fact is that people are now as fed up and as ready for a radical policy as they were at the time of Dunkirk, with the difference that they now have, or are inclined to think they have, a potential leader in Stafford Cripps. I don't mean that people in significant numbers are crying out for the introduction of Socialism, merely that the mass of the nation wants certain things that aren't obtainable under a capitalist economy and is willing to pay almost any price to get them. Few people, for instance, seem to me to feel urgently the need for nationalisation of industry, but all except the interested minority would accept nationalisation without a blink if they were told authoritatively that you can't have efficient war-production otherwise. The fact is that "Socialism," called by that name, isn't by itself an effective rallying cry. To the mass of the people "Socialism" just means the discredited Parliamentary Labour Party, and one feature of the time is the widespread disgust with all the old political parties. But what then do people want? I should say that what they articulately want is more social equality, a complete clean-out of the political leadership, an aggressive war strategy and a tighter alliance with the USSR. But one has to consider the background of these desires before trying to predict what political development is now possible.

SOCIAL EQUALITY

The war has brought the class nature of their society very sharply home to English people, in two ways. First of all there is the unmistakable fact that all real power depends on class privilege. You can only get certain jobs if you have been to one of the right schools, and if you fail and have to be sacked, then somebody else from one of the right schools takes over, and so it continues. This may go unnoticed when things are prospering, but becomes obvious in moments of disaster. Secondly there are the hardships of war, which are, to put it mildly, tempered for anyone with over £2000 a year. I don't want to bore you with a detailed account of the way in which the food rationing is evaded, but you can take it that whereas ordinary people have to live on an uninteresting diet and do without many luxuries they are accustomed to, the rich go short of absolutely nothing except, perhaps, wines, fruit and sugar. You can be almost unaffected by food rationing without even breaking the law, though there is also a lively Black Market. Then there is bootleg petrol and, quite obviously, widespread evasion of Income Tax. This does not go unnoticed, but

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nothing happens because the will to crack down on it is not there while money and political power more or less coincide. To give just one example. At long last, and against much opposition in high places, the Ministry of Food is about to cut down "luxury feeding" by limiting the sum of money that can be spent on a meal in a hotel or restaurant. Already, before the law is even passed, ways of evading it have been thought out, and these are discussed almost undisguisedly in the newspapers.

There are other tensions which the war has brought out but which are somewhat less obvious than the jealousy caused by the Black Market or the discontent of soldiers blancoing their gasmasks under the orders of twerps of officers. One is the growing resentment felt by the underpaid armed forces (at any rate the Army) against the high wages of the munition workers. If this were dealt with by raising the soldier's pay to the munition-worker's level the result would be either inflation or the diversion of labour from war-production to consumption goods. The only real remedy is to cut down the civilian worker's wages as well, which could only be made acceptable by the most drastic income cuts all round—briefly, "war communism." And apart from the class struggle in its ordinary sense there are deeper jealousies within the bourgeoisie than foreigners sometimes realise. If you talk with a BBC accent you can get jobs that a proletarian couldn't get, but it is almost impossible to get beyond a certain point unless you belong socially to the Upper Crust. Everywhere able men feel themselves bottled down by incompetent idiots from the county families. Bound up with this is the crushing feeling we have all had in England these last twenty years that if you have brains "they" (the Upper Crust) will see to it that you are kept out of any really important job. During the years of investment capital we produced like a belt of fat the huge blimpocracy which monopolises official and military power and has an instinctive hatred of intelligence. This is probably a more important factor in England than in a "new" country like the USA. It means that our military weakness goes beyond the inherent weakness of a capitalist state. When in England you find a gifted man in a really commanding position it is usually because he happens to have been born into an aristocratic family (examples are Churchill, Cripps, Mountbatten), and even so he only gets there in moments of disaster when others don't want to take responsibility. Aristocrats apart, those who are branded as "clever" can't get their hands on the real levers of power, and they know it. Of course "clever" individuals do occur in the upper strata, but basically it is a class issue, middle class against upper class.

THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The statement in the March-April PR that "the reins of power are still firmly in the hands of Churchill" is an error. Churchill's position is very shaky. Up to the fall of Singapore it would have been true to say that the mass of the people liked Churchill while disliking the rest of his government, but in recent months his popularity has slumped heavily. In addition he has the rightwing Tories against him (the Tories on the whole have always hated Churchill, though they had to pipe down for a long period), and Beaverbrook is up to some game which I do not fully under-

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stand but which must have the object of bringing himself into power. I wouldn't give Churchill many more months of power, but whether he will be replaced by Cripps, Beaverbrook or somebody like Sir John Anderson is still uncertain.

The reason why nearly everyone who was anti-Nazi supported Churchill from the collapse of France onwards was that there was nobody else—i.e., nobody who was already well enough known to be able to step into power and who at the same time could be trusted not to surrender. It is idle to say that in 1940 we ought to have set up a Socialist government; the mass basis for such a thing probably existed, but not the leadership. The Labour party had no guts, the pinks were defeatist, the Communists effectively pro-Nazi, and in any case there did not exist on the Left one single man of really nation-wide reputation. In the months that followed what was wanted was chiefly obstinacy, of which Churchill had plenty. Now, however, the situation has altered. The strategic situation is probably far better than it was in 1940, but the mass of the people don't think so, they are disgusted by defeats some of which they realise were unnecessary, and they have been gradually disillusioned by perceiving that in spite of Churchill's speeches the old gang stays in power and nothing really alters. For the first time since Churchill came to power the government has begun losing by-elections. Of the five most recent it has lost three, and in the two which it didn't lose one opposition candidate was anti-war (I.L.P.) and the other was regarded as a defeatist. In all these elections the polls were extremely low, in one case reaching the depth-record of 24 per cent of the electorate. (Most wartime polls have been low, but one has to write off something for the considerable shift of population.) There is a most obvious loss of the faith in the old parties, and there is a new factor in the presence of Cripps, who enjoys at any rate for the moment a considerable personal reputation. Just at the moment when things were going very badly he came back from Russia in a blaze of undeserved glory. People had by this time forgotten the circumstances in which the Russo-German war broke out and credited Cripps with having "got Russia in on our side." He was, however, cashing in on his earlier political history and on having never sold out his political opinions. There is good reason to think that at that moment, with no party machine under his control, he did not realise how commanding his personal position was. Had he appealed directly to the public, through the channels open to him, he could probably then and there have forced a more radical policy on the government, particularly in the direction of a generous settlement with India. Instead he made the mistake of entering the government and the almost equally bad one of going to India with an offer which was certain to be turned down. I can't put in print the little I know about the inner history of the Cripps-Nehru negotiations, and in any case the story is too complex to be written about in a letter of this length. The important thing is to what extent this failure has discredited Cripps. The people most interested in ditching the negotiations were the pro-Japanese faction in the Indian Congress party, and the British rightwing Tories. Halifax's speech made

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in New York at the time was interpreted here as an effort to tread on as many Indian toes as possible and thus make a get-together between Cripps and Nehru more difficult. Similar efforts are being made from the opposite end at this moment. The upshot is that Cripps's reputation is damaged in India but not in this country—or, if damaged, then by his entry into the government rather than by the failure in Delhi.

I can't yet give you a worthwhile opinion as to whether Cripps is the man the big public think him, or are half-inclined to think him. He is an enigmatic man who has been politically unstable, and those who know him only agree upon the fact that he is personally honest. His position rests purely upon the popular belief in him, for he has the Labour party machine more or less against him, and the Tories are only temporarily supporting him because they want to use him against Churchill and Beaverbrook and imagine that they can make him into another tame cat like Atlee. Some of the factory workers are inclined to be suspicious of him (one comment reported to me was "Too like Mosley"—meaning too much the man of family who "goes to the people") and the Communists hate him because he is suspected of being anti-Stalin. Beaverbrook already appears to be instituting an attack on Cripps and his newspapers are making use of anti-Stalinist remarks dropped by Cripps in the past. I note that the Germans, to judge from their wireless, would be willing to see Cripps in power if at that price they could get rid of Churchill. They probably calculate that since Cripps has no party machine to rely on he would soon be levered out by the rightwing Tories and make way for Sir John Anderson, Lord Londonderry or someone of that kind. I can't yet say with certainty that Cripps is not merely a secondrate figure to whom the public have tied their hopes, a sort of bubble blown by popular discontent. But at any rate, the way people talked about him when he came back from Moscow was symptomatically important.

WAR STRATEGY

There is endless talk about a second front, those who are for and those who are against being divided roughly along political lines. Much that is said is extremely ignorant, but even people with little military knowledge are able to see that in the last few months we have lost by useless defensive actions a force which, if grouped in one place and used offensively, might have achieved something. Public opinion often seems to be ahead of the so-called experts in matters of grand strategy, sometimes even tactics and weapons. I don't myself know whether the opening of a second front is feasible, because I don't know the real facts about the shipping situation; the only clue I have to the latter is that the food situation hasn't altered during the past year. Official policy seems to be to discountenance the idea of a second front, but just possibly that is only military deception. The rightwing papers make much play with our bombing raids on Germany and suggest that we can tie down a million troops along the coast of Europe by continuous commando raids. The latter is nonsense, as the commandos can't do much when the nights get short, and after our own experiences few people here believe that bombing can settle anything. In

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general the big public is offensive-minded and is always pleased when the government shows by violating international law (eg. Oran, Syria, Madagascar) that it is taking the war seriously. Nevertheless the idea of attacking Spain or Spanish Morocco (much the most hopeful area for a second front in my opinion) is seldom raised. It is agreed by all observers that the Army, ie. rank and file and a lot of the junior officers, is exceedingly browned off, but this does not seem to be the case with the Navy and RAF, and it is easy to get recruits for the dangerous corps such as the commandos and parachute troops. An anonymous pamphlet attacking the blimpocracy, button-polishing, etc., recently sold enormously, and this line is also run by the "Daily Mirror," the soldiers' favourite paper, which was nearly suppressed a few weeks back for its criticisms of the higher command. On the other hand the pamphlets which used to appear earlier in the war, complaining about the hardships of army life, seem to have faded out. Perhaps symptomatically important is the story now widely circulated, that the real reason why the higher-ups have stuck out against adopting dive bombers is that these are cheap to manufacture and don't represent much profit. I know nothing as to the truth of this story, but I record the fact that many people believe it. Churchill's speech a few days back in which he referred to possible use of poison gas by the Germans was interpreted as a warning that gas warfare will begin soon. Usual comment: "I hope we start using it first." People seem to me to have got tougher in their attitude, in spite of general discontent and the lack of positive war aims. It is hard to assess how much the man in the street cared about the Singapore disaster. Working-class people seemed to me to be more impressed by the escape of the German warships from Brest. The opinion seems general that Germany is the real enemy, and newspaper efforts to work up a hate over Japanese atrocities failed. My impression is that people will go on fighting indefinitely so long as Germany is in the field, but that if Germany should be knocked out they would not continue the war against Japan unless a real and intelligible war aim were produced.

THE RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

I have referred in earlier letters to the great growth of pro-Russian feeling. It is difficult, however, to be sure how deep this goes. A Trotskyist said to me recently that he thought that by their successful resistance the Russians had won back all the credit they lost by the Hitler-Stalin pact and the Finnish war. I don't believe this is so. What has happened is that the USSR has gained a lot of admirers it did not previously have, but many who used to be its uncritical adherents have grown cannier. One notices here a gulf between what is said publicly and privately. In public nobody says a word against the USSR, but in private, apart from the "disillusioned" Stalinists that one is always meeting, I notice a more sceptical attitude among thinking people. One sees this especially in conversations about the second front. The official attitude of the pinks is that if we open up a second front the Russians will be so grateful that they will be our comrades to the last. In reality, to open a second front with-

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out a clear agreement beforehand would simply give the Russians the opportunity to make a separate peace; for if we succeeded in drawing the Germans away from their territories, what reason would they have for going on fighting? Another theory favoured in leftwing papers is that the more fighting we do the more say we shall have in the post-war settlement. This again is an illusion; those who dictate the peace treaties are those who have remained strongest, which usually means those who have managed to avoid fighting (eg. the USA in the last war). Considerations of this kind seldom find their way into print but are admitted readily enough in private. I think people have not altogether forgotten the Russo-German pact and that fear of another doublecross partly explains their desire for a closer alliance. But there is also much sentimental boosting of Russia, based on ignorance and played up by all kinds of crooks who are utterly anti-Socialist but see that the Red Army is a popular line. I must take back some of the favourable references I made in earlier letters to the Beaverbrook press. After giving his journalists a free hand for a year or more, during which some of them did good work in enlightening the big public, Beaverbrook has again cracked the whip and is setting his team at work to attack Churchill and, more directly, Cripps. He is simultaneously yapping against fuel-rationing, petrol-rationing and other restrictions on private capitalism, and posing as more Stalinist than the Stalinists. Most of the rightwing press adopts the more cautious line of praising "the great Russian people" (historic parallels with Napoleon, etc.) while keeping silent about the nature of the Russian regime. The "International" is at last being played on the wireless. Molotov's speech on the German atrocities was issued as a White Paper, but in deference to somebody's feelings (I don't know whether Stalin's or the King's) the royal arms were admitted from the cover. People in general want to think well of Russia, though still vaguely hostile to Communism. They would welcome a joint declaration of war aims and a close co-ordination of strategy. I think many people realise that a firm alliance with Russia is difficult while the Munich crew are still more or less in power, but much fewer grasp that the comparative political backwardness of the USA presents another difficulty.

REVOLUTION OR DISASTER?

Well, that is the set-up as I see it. It seems to me that we are back to the "revolutionary situation" which existed but was not utilised after Dunkirk. From that time until quite recently one's thoughts necessarily moved in some such progression as this:

We can't win the war with our present social and economic structure.

The structure won't change unless there is a rapid growth in popular consciousness.

The only thing that promotes this growth is military disasters.

One more disaster and we shall lose the war.

In the circumstances all one could do was to "support" the war, which

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involved supporting Churchill, and hope that in some way it would all come right on the night—ie., that the mere necessities of war, the inevitable drift towards a centralised economy and a more equal standard of living, would force the regime gradually to the left and allow the worst reactionaries to be levered out. No one in his senses supposed that the British ruling classes would legislate themselves out of existence, but they might be manœuvred into a position where their continuance in power was quite obviously in the Nazi interest. In that case the mass of the nation would swing against them and it would be possible to get rid of them with little or no violence. Before writing this off as a hopelessly "reformist" strategy it is worth remembering that England is literally within gunshot of the continent. Revolutionary defeatism, or anything approaching it, is nonsense in our geographical situation. If there were even a week's serious disorganisation in the armed forces the Nazis would be here, after which one might as well stop talking about revolution.

To some small extent things have happened as I foresaw. One can after all discern the outlines of a revolutionary world war. Britain has been forced into alliance with Russia and China and into restoring Abyssinia and making fairly generous treaties with the Middle Eastern countries, and because of, among other things, the need to raise a huge air force a serious breach has been made in the class system. The defeats in the Far East have gone a long way towards killing the old conception of imperialism. But there was a sort of gap in the ladder which we never got over and which it was perhaps impossible to get over while no revolutionary party and no able leftwing leadership existed. This may or may not have been altered by the emergence of Cripps. I think it is certain that a new political party will have to arise if anything is to be changed, and the obvious bankruptcy of the old parties may hasten this. Maybe Cripps will lose his lustre quite quickly if he does not get out of the government. But at present, in his peculiar isolated position, he is the likeliest man for any new movement to crystallise round. If he fails, God save us from the other probable alternatives to Churchill.

I suppose as usual I have written too much. There is not much change in our everyday lives here. The nation went onto brown bread a few weeks back. The basic petrol ration stops next month, which in theory means the end of private motoring. The new luxury taxes are terrific. Cigarettes now cost a shilling for ten and the cheapest beer tenpence a pint (fourpence in 1936). Everyone seems to be working longer and longer hours. Now and again at intervals of weeks one gets one's head above water for a moment and notices with surprise that the earth is still going round the sun. One day I noticed crocuses in the parks, another day pear blossom, another day hawthorn. One seems to catch vague glimpses of these things through a mist of war news.

Yours ever,
GEORGE ORWELL.

London, May 8, 1942.

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At the Foot of the Page

Lionel Abel

I. MY PUPIL

"WHAT DO YOU WANT of him?" cried my wife. "Why do you bother him? He doesn't want to listen to you. He probably doesn't like you. Just let him alone."

"He is interested in literature. So I take it for granted he is interested in what I have to say."

"Don't take it for granted," said my wife. "He doesn't want to listen to you. He may be interested in literature but not in your literature. I can see by the look on his face that he doesn't like you."

"We have had some very splendid conversations," I argued, "and once he said something too. So you must be wrong about him. He may not know much about literature but he has a genuine desire to learn. I think of him as a pupil."

My wife became exasperated as women will when you meet their unreasonableness with objective arguments. "A pupil!" she shouted, "but he doesn't pay attention! I tell you that you make him nervous. He probably hates you. Do you know why you think he's your pupil? Shall I tell you why? Because you haven't any pupils. Because you're a teacher now only in your own mind. Do you know how long it is since you had a job in the University? Shall I remind you?"

"Wife," I said with dignity, "let me hear your complaints in order and I shall try to understand them. But don't pretend to criticise my relations with my friend Smertenko when what you are really irritated by is something of an altogether different order —the fact that, as a result of the depression, I haven't been able to get a new appointment."

"A different order!" she shouted. "If you had half as much sense as your pupil, Smertenko, you would understand what I am complaining about. For God's sake, get a job and don't lecture to me about things in which I take no interest and haven't paid ten dollars a credit to understand. And don't make life miserable for

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everyone you meet on the street who is polite enough to endure your pedagogy. Now, do you know what I mean?"

It was useless to argue the matter further. When a woman has a practical problem on her mind she is not susceptible to subtleties. And my wife did not really know Smertenko. I, who was not at the moment overly concerned with obtaining a university post, could see more clearly. I saw the puzzled soul of poor Smertenko, and the mediocre brain too, pondering over the complexities of literary analysis. And what my wife interpreted as difficulty in listening I understood as the struggle to comprehend.

Nevertheless my wife's remarks must have affected me for the next time I ran into Smertenko I found myself watching him instead of talking to him. And before I knew it, he said something to me.

Smertenko told me that he completely disagreed with me on all fundamental questions, that as far as he was concerned I approached problems too abstractly, was pedantic, academic and unilluminating, and that my notions about lyric poetry, which I have studied with particular concentration, could not be taken seriously.

I thought, "I can lose my temper after I answer him."

"Smertenko," I said, "I have found that the people with whom I have had serious literary discussions fall into three general categories. It has been possible for me to maintain friendly relations only with those who can be included in the first two of these categories. Some people recognize my profundity at once. Some people recognize my profundity when it is called to their attention. The rest do not respect me. I see now that you do not belong to the first category."

"That's quite possible," said Smertenko.

"The question is: do you belong to the second category or to the third? You can take your choice. If you feel that you belong to the third category you must, of course, be willing to accept the consequence of your choice. Our conversations could not continue."

It seemed to me that he turned quite pale.

"You mean to say that you won't talk to me?"

"Exactly."

He hesitated and then said with a sort of gasp, "All right. I belong to the second category."

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I considered the matter settled and went home to tell my wife.

"I had it out with Smertenko today," I informed her, "and just as I thought, you were entirely wrong about him. Do you know what happened? He attacked me. He made some rather wild criticisms of certain of my ideas, yet we parted on the best terms imaginable."

"I don't believe it," she replied.

The next time I saw Smertenko my wife was with me. But it was from a distance. He saw me too, while we were still half a block away, turned around, and hurried off in the opposite direction. These manœuvres did not escape my wife's notice.

"He likes you!" she said in that sarcastic way she has, sometimes. "He's criticising your ideas. Can't you see? Or are you foolish enough to think he is trying to avoid you?"

2. A LECTURE UNDERGROUND

Smertenko, I heard, had moved to Brooklyn. At first I was furious. The insolent sneak! To make off like that to another borough! But the motive . . . his motive. . . . My wife said he disliked me. I bullied him a bit, not meaning to, just naturally. Had he taken offense? Impossible! Possibly. . . .

He resented my bullying. It seems he was writing. A book of some sort. Lacking talent and inspiration, what he needed to get on with it—and needed in quantity—was gumption. The fool was shrewd in his folly, such people always are. A Smertenko with gumption had become his objective. He must have felt that in my neighborhood this could not be realized. Hence Brooklyn.

So that was it.

Smertenko's wife, a school teacher, supported him. They justified this arrangement by believing that he was an author.

Could she have accepted a Smertenko-not-an-author? Flo, if the truth be told, was not much to look at. Flo was just so-so. And Smertenko? Undersized and longnosed, pale, frail and jowly, his expression was at once morose and trivial.

Smertenko had only to speak of something casually to make you feel it must be worthless. His toneless note and constant grin contributed to this effect. And when he was forced to deal with

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something great, famous or esteemed, he invariably found a way, often ingenious, to connect it with something puerile.

One time he told me he had been to Palestine. "Really!" I was impressed. Palestine! It was hard for me to imagine Smertenko on ground held to be sacred. He must have felt the same way about it for he added quickly, "I played handball, you know, against the Wailing Wall."

The invidious is always in context. Such, I take it, was Smertenko's metaphysic. There was hardly a word of praise in his vocabulary. To hear him on a book he claimed to have enjoyed! He affected an admiration for Joyce's "Ulysses," and the pleasure he got from it he characterized as "intolerable." But D. H. Lawrence's "Women in Love" was his favorite. "That miserable Lawrence," he would say, "that phoney D. H.! What sort of book is 'Women in Love'? You read it and it just gripes. What the hell!" Such was his panegyric style.

"So Smertenko has moved to Brooklyn," my wife remarked when she heard about it. "So he is living in Brooklyn. And don't you wish you were? Don't you now?"

"I like Manhattan."

"Isn't Brooklyn, when you come to think of it, superior to Manhattan?"

"There is no reason," I told her, for I knew what she was driving at, "to follow Smertenko to Brooklyn."

"No reason? But there is! An excellent reason. When a pupil is intractable the teacher should not humor him. Smertenko is your pupil. It is your duty to be near him, no matter how strongly he objects to you. Follow him to Brooklyn."

I decided not to answer.

"Follow him to Brooklyn. After all, we can go anywhere, anywhere, anywhere!"

We were having dinner, my wife and I. Some money had come in for a French translation, and to celebrate the event we were eating out. O but we were celebrating! We munched in moody silence the best spaghetti of a cheap spaghetti house, I engaged in severe consideration of the breadsticks which flanked my tableside, while my wife, for her part, made acquaintance with

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the crumbs and winestains to her left. Once or twice I faced around to offer, in full and fair exchange, my breadstick vista for her crumb and winestain view. But she looked at me each time with frank hostility. I was encroaching on her sphere of interest. Or of disinterest. For at our table the negative was dominant.

I had observed that my wife was about done with spaghetti. She must want bread, and if she does, I calculated, she will have to ask for it. She will have to speak to me. And then I heard a sticky, toneless note:

"Hello. So here you are. I was hoping to run into you."

It was Smertenko. He was grinning from ear to ear, quite proud of himself for having been away from me, playing hookey in a Brooklyn hideout.

"So you have come back, after all."

"And I thought you had sense," my wife said.

"I now live in Brooklyn," said Smertenko. It was a statement of fact, not an apology. "But out there, don't you know, so few people to converse with. About literature."

"You are still a lover of literature."

"How you talk! Not a lover! But I read. And I read several books out in Brooklyn."

"Which you would like me to discuss."

"Yes. There was one book I wanted to get your angle on."

"And what book is it we must thank for having brought you from Brooklyn?"

"Journey at Night, at the End of the Night. . . ."

"You mean 'Journey to the End of the Night' by Louis-Ferdinand Celine."

He surprised me by endorsing the book without reservation:

"A great work to my mind, a great and tragic work, filled with bitter and important truths." He had dropped his customary invidious verbalisms and was employing cliches from the reviewers. So here was a book he really admired!

"But sit down," said my wife. "You came for a lecture and I see that you are going to get one. Better make yourself comfortable."

" 'Journey to the End of the Night' presents a very special problem for literary criticism. It is at once profound and artis-

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tically inferior, you can regard it as great and, with equal justice, as a paltry work. Profound, I should say, because Louis-Ferdinand Celine in this outrageous and unsatisfactory novel has succeeded in reworking in completely modern terms one of the great dramatic types. . . . But do you know what the significance is of a dramatic type?"

"No," said Smertenko, "but you are going to tell me, aren't you?"

"To tell you in complete detail I should have to distinguish a dramatic type from ideological caricature on the one hand and conceptless empiric ego on the other . . . but that would take us far afield. Let me say this: Your true dramatic type is nothing less than an absolute perspective. A hackneyed phrase, but here is what I mean: Imagine the most powerful telescope man can construct, or the most delicate microscope. These instruments would be absolutes of physical perception. Nothing of small or far beyond their sights could by man be seen. Similarly with perception in the dramatic realm. Would you like to behold the world at its most morally ambiguous? Then experience it with von Aschenbach of 'Death in Venice.' But perhaps you would like to experience the world when it is most assimilable to inquiring mind? Then look at it with young Bernard of 'The Counterfeiters' or Hans Castorp of 'The Magic Mountain.' Through them you attain your most educable eyes. . . ."

"Aschenbach, Bernard, Castorp," my wife broke in, "A, B, C. . . . Are you going to give us all the characters of literature in alphabetical order? My husband, Smertenko, is a natural born pedant."

"Zossima. . . . The world as a miracle, hence susceptible to love, if you experience it as Father Zossima of 'The Brothers Karamazov.' But if what in fact you want to see is the world in its most degraded state, if you want to look at its botch and bung, then you must peer at it with some groundling underman, Thersites, punk of Ajax, or Apemantus, Timon's shrewd tormentor, or, most perfect to my taste, the spiteful clerk of Dostoyevsky's novel, who calls himself a 'man from underground.' You need a Man From Underground. . . ."

"Repulsively right!" said Smertenko with a grin. "I am even inclined to go along with you. But when are you going to journey to the end of the night?"

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"We are already there. Bardamu, the cynical and psychotic deserter of Celine's novel, according to his own description 'venomous yet docile, outraged, robbed, without guts and without spirit' is, like Thersites, Apemantus, and Dostoevsky's clerk, a man from underground. Bardamu travels. But there is only one possible destination for a traveller underground. . . . The end of the night.

"Bardamu is a Frenchman but does not regard himself as French. He has an intuitive feeling that he must be classified in dramatic terms. Listen to his notions about race:

" 'What you call race,' he says, 'is only that great heap of worm-eaten drunks like me, bleary, lousy, shivering, who, coming from the four corners of the world defeated, have ended up here escaping from hunger, pestilence and cold.' He belongs to the defeated, that is his race. He speaks French, but with a Thersites accent. Over his head, without respect for his desires, the work of the world is performed. He, naturally, has only contempt for the performance. 'There is no rest for the humble,' Bardamu says, 'except in despising the great.' "

"How true!" breathed Smertenko.

"But Bardamu despises the lowly as well as the great. And himself too. Nothing and no one can escape his disgust. There is hardly a word of praise in his vocabulary. He has only to mention something casually to make you feel it must be worthless. The invidious is always in context. Such, I take it, Smerkamu, is Bartenko's metaphysic. . . ."

It was a slip. My wife laughed. Smertenko looked at us suspiciously.

"All right," he said, "I follow you so far. I understand that Celine has created a type. Right. So the book is profound. But why do you say that it is unsatisfactory?"

"Artistically unsatisfactory in that Celine cannot see the dramatic limits or present the proper outline of his character. Celine *agrees* with Bardamu. Bardamu's opinions are important because of the profundity of his predicament, they are not, strictly speaking, true. They correspond to his experience, but other experiences, thank God, are possible. Bardamu does not even exhaust the possibilities of contempt. There is a contempt from above as well as from below. And since Celine agrees with him we find, as the novel develops, that the hero's mephitic opinions are invariably

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confirmed. Result: the structure of the novel is more like logic than like drama. . . .

"But what I want to emphasize is that your man from underground is not the best or only philosopher. He philosophizes, I grant, with serious categories. Not indeed, with a hammer, as Nietzsche advised, but yet with a greening handkerchief and a full garbage pail. — However, there are other instruments of analysis. — Shameless he is shamed. Shrewd he is duped as well as the naive and noble. And to believe in him is only a particularly spiteful species of idolatry. . . ."

As we walked Smertenko to the subway, I reflected that this had been one of my most successful lectures. It even seemed to me that my wife had enjoyed the discussion. And what was a real triumph, I had been the first one to notice that it was getting late and suggest that we go. Smertenko had seemed dissatisfied and sulky, but had offered no rebuttal.

We stood on the corner of Fourteenth Street. Smertenko prepared to detach himself. I looked down into the pit into which he was to be dismissed, and thought of the grinding dark below.

"So you're off to Brooklyn," I said, "but you'll come back, of course? We'll talk some more."

Smertenko hesitated, must have been unable to formulate any farewell, turned, and was swallowed up by the subway entrance. I was unprepared for such behavior. But my wife had a comment ready.

"He must certainly have enjoyed your lecture."

We turned toward our own night. But we had hardly taken a few steps when we heard Smertenko shouting: "I don't believe it! There's no underground, no man underground! It's all nonsense!"

We looked back toward the subway entrance in time to see Smertenko's head and shoulders drawn once more below.

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Poems

Robert Fitzgerald

CARMEN XI

Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli . . .

Furius and Aurelius, Catullus's comrades,
Whether he penetrate the ultimate Indies,
Where the rolling surf on the shores of Morning
Beats and again beats,

Or in the land of Bedouin, the soft Arabs,
Or Parthians, the ungentlemanly archers,
Or where the Nile with seven similar streamlets
Colors the clear sea;

Or if he cross the loftier Alpine passes
And view the monuments of almighty Caesar—
The Rhine, and France, and even those remotest
Shuddersome British—

Friends, prepared for all of these, whatever
Province the celestial ones may wish me,
Take a little bulletin to my girl friend,
Brief but not dulcet:

Let her live and thrive with her fornicators,
Of whom she hugs three hundred in an evening,
With no true love for any, leaving them broken-
Winded the same way.

She need not look, as once she did, for my love.
By her own fault it died, like a tumbling flower
At the field's edge, after the passing harrow
Clipped it and left it.

Ronald Hambleton

Her body is in the trees
Asking budding questions
With a mouth scarcely green;
The sap visibly colors

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Her speaking tributaries;
But the trees, the trees,
That answer no question swift enough,
Heave their prodigious scholarship
Underground in a tortuous argument.

Her breasts are beyond my window,
Just beyond, for I approximate
Their beauty, and never question their being
Twin unbelievable birds
Whispering what a hundred strings
Can only mutter.

After this discourse and this music
There is, under the knee and among
The vulnerable alps of the spine,
More tremulating firmness, than in
A sequoia's new ring,
Or the liquid assets of the sky.

SOCKEYE SALMON

Caught in the glib catcher's net
With the fly that wanders, is the wonder fish;
Threshes a moment in the windowed lace
Till the eye is opaque and supremely glazed.
Not projects outward no tangent beam,
Not gets increase of scenery
Passing to afflict the retina.
Being unfit to negotiate
The invisible livelihood of lungs,
It flails in a harder-to-swim-in sea.
Outward in material lies its wherewithal,
And the gills adjust, discriminate,
But is caught by the introspective air
That moves captor's brain and viscera.

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Hung like a murderer with stretched-out neck,
Prepared for dissection, absorption, use,
Subject to putrefactive air,
In gaunt symmetry lies the wonder fish;
The trip from the egg to the waterfall,
Leaping lively or lying sunned,
The spawning, the schooling, the quick increase,
Are value and profit and capital.
No natural course is dissatisfied,
No function corrupted, there is no waste.
Use has been served up with vinegar,
The matter discussed with great dispatch.
In the ribbed lucent shallows is the window clear;
And the eyes' connection established there
All harmony, because all enmity
Has logically come to stay;
Cements by its close attractive gaze;
For man and fish find purest pleasure
In their prostituting mutual sight.

Lenore G. Marshall

AS THOUGH FROM LOVE

Out of the matrix
Of those lies
Light pierced as though
They had been verities.

At last O at last
Darkness grew so blind
That the heart broke:
Found egress through the mind.

Then from barren room
And bleak door
Creeping from bitter place
Sorrows turned servitor

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Against whom contending
New vistas rose
As though from love, as though from hope, as though
They had been verities.

The shadowy past
Stands like a bed
Where matings were,
From whence this seed was bred

Whose roots plunge deeply
Into grief;
Old memories
Inhabit stones with life

And make strange faces
Sudden kin,
Recovering time;
No longer now alone.

What bent key opened up
The dust?
What world retrieved
From a world lost?

The various hours
Vainly spent
Became a glass,
An instrument

Wherein to discern
What had been blank before,
The lineaments of night.
Sorrows turned servitor,

Against whom contending
Through all those lies
Light, immaculate, pierced as though
They had been verities.

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Karl J. Shapiro

HAIRCUT

O wonderful nonsense of lotions of Lucky Tiger,
Of savory soaps and oils of bottle-bright green,
The gold of liqueurs, the unguents of Newark and Niger,
Powders and balms and waters washing me clean,

In mirrors of marble and silver I see us forever
Increasing, decreasing the puzzles of luminous spaces
As I turn, am revolved and pumped in the air on a lever,
With the backs of my heads in chorus with all of my faces.

Scissors and comb are mowing my hair into neatness,
Now pruning my ears, now smoothing my neck like a plain;
In the harvest of hair and the chaff of powdery sweetness
My snow-covered slopes grow dark with the wooly rain.

And the little boy cries, for it hurts to sever the curl,
And we too are quietly bleating to part with our coat.
Does the barber want blood in a dish? I am weak as a girl,
I desire my pendants, the fatherly chin of a goat.

I desire the pants of a bear, the nap of a monkey
Which trousers of friction have blighted down to my skin.
I am bare as a tusk, as jacketed up as a flunkey,
With the chest of a moth-eaten camel growing within.

But in death we shall flourish, you summer-dark leaves of my head
While the flesh of the jaw ebbs away from the shores of my teeth;
You shall cover my sockets and soften the boards of my bed
And lie on the flat of my temples as proud as a wreath.

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The (American) People's Century

Dwight Macdonald

ON MAY 9 LAST, Vice-President Wallace delivered a speech before the Free World Association which is the boldest attempt yet made by a Democratic leader to set the war in a historical perspective and to outline positive war aims. Realizing that "Beat Hitler" and "Survive" are negative slogans which arouse little enthusiasm, Wallace tries to show that a Democratic victory will usher in a golden age of worldwide democracy and progress, "the century of the common man." His speech has been gratefully seized on by the liberal intellectuals, who have long been pleading with the authorities for such a statement. It seems to me, however, precisely because of its ambitious nature (and its unquestionable sincerity), to expose with special clarity the bankruptcy of the Democratic war aims from a *positive* point of view. I think an examination of this speech will show what Gandhi meant when he recently observed that the Democracies "lack the moral basis for waging war."

I must first make it clear, however, that I am still of the opinion expressed by Clement Greenberg and myself in "10 Propositions on the War" a year ago, that a Nazi victory in this war would mean a real break in the continuity of our civilization, and that fascism, both within and without, is the main enemy in this period. But it also still seems true to me that the Roosevelt-Churchill regimes, committed to the defense of the capitalist status quo, cannot effectively fight fascism. A purely *military* victory over the Axis is, of course, possible—though recent events in Libya seem to confirm the criticisms, in the "10 Propositions," of the Democratic war effort even in this sphere. But fascism—as against the present regimes in the Axis powers—is a problem which must be met not on the military but on the social and political plane. And here is just where the present Democratic regimes seem to me unable to provide a positive alternative. "We will not accept a world, like the post-war world of the 1920's, in which the seeds of

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Hitlerism can again be planted and allowed to grow," said President Roosevelt on May 27, 1941. But this is precisely the kind of post-war world that seems to be materializing.

1.

In stirring phrases, Wallace pictures the war as "a fight between a free world and a slave world," the latest (and, by implication, the final) milestone on "the millenial and revolutionary march of the common man towards freedom," whose previous milestones include the Great French Revolution and the 1917 Russian Revolution. "The people are on the march toward even fuller freedom than the most fortunate peoples of the world have hitherto enjoyed. No Nazi counter-revolutionist will stop it. . . . The people's revolution is on the march, and the devil and all his angels cannot prevail against it. They cannot prevail, for on the side of the people is the Lord."

This encouraging view of the future is possible to Wallace because his is a Victorian optimism of progress, based on a belief in the automatic beneficence of industrialization plus popular education. (It is analagous to the faith of some contemporary followers of Marx in collectivised property as a guarantor of social progress.) "Down the years," Wallace writes, "the people of the United States have moved steadily forward in the practice of democracy. Through universal education, they can now read and write and form opinions of their own. . . . Everywhere, reading and writing are accompanied by industrial progress, and industrial progress sooner or later brings a strong labor movement."

That universal literacy, with all media of communication in the hands of the dominant class, has become a means of *preventing* people from having "opinions of their own"—this is no clearer to Wallace today than it was to Herbert Spencer in the last century. Nor is there any place in his cosmology for the two great historical developments of our time: the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Nazism. For the industrialization of Russia and the education of its masses have been accompanied by a *contraction* of the area of political freedom, and Hitler came to power in the most industrialized and best-educated country in Europe (also with the strongest labor movement). Wallace avoids these objections by asserting that "in the process" of abolishing illiteracy "Russia's appreciation of freedom was tremendously increased,"

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which simply is not true (unless in the sense that one values what one hasn't got), and by pointing out the lack of a tradition of self-government in Germany, which merely removes the difficulty back one stage and raises the question, why did such a country fail to develop a democratic tradition?

The fact is that Hitler came to power precisely because industrial progress under capitalism does not strengthen democracy, but on the contrary creates a situation—concentration of capital, over-development of productivity in relation to the market, mass unemployment, pressure for imperialist expansion—in which fascism offers a real way out for the ruling class and an apparent way out for large sections of the masses. It is true that, as Wallace says, the "persons of wealth" who backed Hitler did not know what "the end result" would be, but the end result is always obscure, and such decisions are taken on the basis of immediate necessities. And the choice in 1933 was not, as Wallace implies, between fascism and liberal capitalism, but between fascism and communism. The German people had no great attachment to the democratic capitalism of Weimar. The millions of unemployed found jobs under Hitler and also, equally important, a place in society; all classes stood to gain if Hitler's program for conquest should succeed and Germany became the exploiter of a subjugated Europe. There were also less tangible motives: as Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* shows, fascism takes advantage of a deep psychological craving for security which the conditions of life in democratic-capitalist society arouse without satisfying. Fascism offers a neurotic, that is an ersatz, solution.

If such phenomena simply don't fit into Wallace's historical schema, neither does the fact that for the second time in a generation the world is at war. He must load the sins of capitalism onto the scapegoat Hitler, "the curse of the modern world," much as Hitler loaded them onto the Jews. Instead of seeing Hitlerism as the terrible result of capitalism's social failure, Wallace seems to see it as a monstrosity which in some way has arisen entirely outside the democratic-capitalist order he is defending. "So great are the psychological resistances to war in modern nations," writes Harold Lasswell in *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, "that every war must appear to be a war of defense against a menacing, murderous aggressor. There must be no ambiguity about whom the public is to hate. The war must not be due to a world system of conducting international affairs, nor to the stupid-

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ity or malevolence of all governing classes, but to the rapacity of the enemy. Guilt and guilelessness must be assessed geographically, and all the guilt must be on the other side of the frontier." The enemy, furthermore, must be represented as "Satanic" and "an obstacle to the realization of the cherished ideals and dreams of the nation." Wallace refers to Hitler as "Satan" seven times in the course of his speech.

Against the black picture of Satan-Hitler, Wallace sets a bright painting of the situation on our side of the battle-lines: a steady, 'inevitable' forward march by the common people towards ever-increasing democracy and security. I doubt if this picture makes much appeal to the common man—not the columnists and politicians who use such brave words in his name, but to the real man in the street. New Dealers like Wallace are in the difficult tactical position of the Blum Popular Front, the Weimar Social-Democracy, or the present British Labor Party: they are liberal apologists for a system whose workings patently contradict the principles they profess, and never more so than in a crisis like the present war. They are on the defensive, forced to whitewash a system that is no longer just or humane or even workable, fighting a "survival war" in every sense. Wallace betrays an uneasy consciousness of this in the desperate efforts he makes to paint this as a "revolutionary" war. But it is a curious sort of revolution whose army is commanded by a Stimson, whose navy is led by a Knox, and whose foreign policy is in the hands of Hull and Welles.

Wallace's speech strikes a major note of Democratic propaganda in this war in its frequent appeals to religious sanction. "The idea of freedom," he writes, 'the freedom that we in the United States know and love so well, is derived from the Bible with its extraordinary emphasis on the dignity of the individual. Democracy is the only true political expression of Christianity." When it comes to The Enemy, his tone becomes revivalist: "As long as his [Hitler's] spell holds, he defies God himself and Satan is turned loose on the world. . . . Through the leaders of the Nazi revolution, Satan is now trying to lead the common man of the whole world back into slavery and darkness." These statesmen nowhere betray the conservative nature of the war they are waging than in their attempts to appeal to a religiosity which their own system has for centuries been killing.

The flabbiness of the Democratic war aims is also betrayed

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by another characteristic theme in Wallace's speech: his inclusion of the U.S.S.R. among the freedom-loving nations. This is a historical insight which would hardly have occurred to him before June 25, 1941. (No one can be more opportunist than the naive man of high principles.) The resistance of the Red Army to Hitler offers the Democracies at once their greatest material asset and their worst ideological embarrassment. In the last war Russia presented a similar ideological awkwardness, but there was no attempt to pretend that Czarism was a variant form of democracy. This time it is different. When Roosevelt first outlined his "five freedoms," he warned against "ideological flirting with the corporate state." "Too many people, he said, were wedded to the idea of government by dictatorship, as in Germany, Italy and Russia. . . . Mr. Roosevelt said there could be no compromise, even philosophical, between the two concepts of government. To do so would be to sacrifice the principles of the one to those of the other." (*N. Y. Times,* July 6, 1940) This high-minded attitude, however, was rendered politicaly obsolete a year later by the Nazi attack on Russia. Comrade Browder's shift on the war was no more abrupt and thorough than Roosevelt's change of mind about the Stalin regime. Within a few weeks of the Nazi attack, Roosevelt was picturing Russia as a land of religious freedom. Far from criticising the lack of democracy in totalitarian Russia, the Democratic leaders have adapted their ideological line to the Kremlin's necessities, as in the notorious omission of two of Roosevelt's "four freedoms"—freedom of speech and freedom of religion—from the Atlantic Charter. To have retained those two freedoms would have raised awkward questions in this country when Soviet Russia came to be included in the Charter.

The extremely realistic attitude of the Democratic leaders towards the Stalinist *and the Nazi* dictatorship is best revealed by some observations by Foreign Secretary Eden on his conferences with Stalin early this year: "Mr. Eden said that all difficulties must be faced. There was a difference between the two forms of government and a legacy of suspicion on both sides to be vanquished. But he added that the whole point in foreign affairs was not a nation's internal but its external policy. Reichsführer Hitler could have remained a Nazi if he had stayed a Nazi at home, he said. [Direct quotation, according to *War Commentary,* Mid-January 1942: "The trouble with Hitler, for instance, was not

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that he was a Nazi at home. The trouble with him was that he would not stay at home."] By implication, Mr. Eden indicated that Russia was determined to retain her form of government but would not try to spread it over the world." (*N. Y. Times*, Jan. 5)

2.

On this shaky ideological foundation Wallace rears a shining vision of the (Naziless) future. It is this vision which has made his speech so powerfully attractive to the liberals. He quotes his "half-serious" remark to Madame Litvinoff: "The object of this war is to make sure that everybody in the world has the privilege of drinking a quart of milk a day." ("Yes, even a pint," cautiously amends the wife of the Soviet Ambassador.) Or, in more grandiose terms:

> The people are on the march toward even fuller freedom than the most fortunate peoples of the world have hitherto enjoyed. . . . The peace must mean a better standard of living for the common man, not merely in the United States and England, but also in India, Russia, China and Latin America—not merely in the United States, but also in Germany and Italy and Japan. . . . No nation will have the God-given right to exploit other nations. . . . Those who write the peace must think of the whole world. There can be no privileged peoples.

These are heart-warming words. (Though one recalls that another idealist, General Smuts, wrote in 1918: "There is no doubt that mankind is once more on the move. . . . The tents have been struck and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march.") There is no question but that Wallace's speech is the most exhilirating variation yet played on what has significantly become the major theme of war-aims propaganda *on both sides of this war:* the promise of a world-wide economic reconstruction which will give the masses that social security they have so conspicuously lacked under capitalism.

"Two years ago," Dr. Goebbels complained recently, "the Allied slogans called for the defeat of Reichsfuhrer Hitler and his regime so that world democracy might be saved, but now there is scarcely a newspaper in the United States or Britain that is not propagating with holy zeal an equitable world order and a just distribution of raw materials as against plutocratic exploitation and imperialistic power politics." (*N. Y. Times*, May 30) Goebbels also charged that the Anglo-American leaders are "stealing National Socialist thunder." Hitler's use of propaganda was as skillful and daring as his use of other war weapons, and the

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Democracies took a long time to catch up to him. It was a full eighteen months before any Democratic leader was able to formulate any *positive* war aims. Daladier talked of "a war to put an end to a regime of force, rapine and prey." Chamberlain declared that the first war aim was to defeat the enemy and his "aggressive, bullying mentality," after which Britain would create "a new Europe," details unspecified. Pressed in Parliament in the fall of 1940 for a statement of war aims, Churchill replied he was unwilling "to go beyond the very carefully considered general statement which already has been made"—i.e., Chamberlain's statement.

Finally, on January 6, 1941, Roosevelt outlined his famous "four freedoms": freedom of speech—"everywhere in the world"; freedom of religion—"everywhere in the world"; freedom from want and freedom from fear, also "everywhere in the world." If Roosevelt represents in this war "the conscience of the world," as Wilson did in the last, it is because of two notes struck here: (1) democratic universality, as expressed in the rhetorical iteration of "everywhere in the world"; (2) "freedom from want," a projection of New Deal ideology on a world scale. In making the first official statement on war aims for the Churchill Government, Anthony Eden significantly followed Roosevelt's lead, building his whole speech around the "four freedoms," which he quoted in full as expressing "the keynote of our purposes." (*N. Y. Times*, May 30, 1941)*

The decay of world capitalism since the last war is revealed in the detail that the Atlantic Charter devotes three of its eight points to this "freedom from want" theme, which is not even mentioned in Wilson's Fourteen Points. In 1918 Wilson was able to assume the health and desirability of the capitalist economic system; the disease, he thought, could be cured by political reforms only—self-determination of nations, League of Nations. The world could believe him in 1918, which is why the Fourteen Points were "the greatest victory of the last war." Today this belief in a purely *political* solution under capitalism is no longer possible, and so the

*The purely defensive note still appears, however. Thus only a few weeks before Wallace made his "People's Century" speech, President Roosevelt, after inviting suggestions, officially gave a name to this war—not "the People's War," not "the Battle of the Four Freedoms," but—"the Survival War." This alternation between optimism and pessimism, positive and negative is typical of the present Democratic regimes, which maintain themselves by balancing one ideology against another, one class against another, mediating between irreconcilables. The result in the field of war aims is a bewildering medley of Survival War, neo-imperialism, and People's Century.

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Charter promises a better *economic* world order. But whereas Wilson was able to make specific proposals—since they did not conflict with the maintenance of capitalism—Roosevelt-Churchill are not. Reorganization of world economy so as to achieve "freedom from want—all over the world" would destroy the very system of capitalist private enterprise they are committed to defend. And so they must talk only in philanthropic generalities, which are contradicted so grossly and persistently by the actual policies carried out now, that even the Man in the Street can see that there is little solid content there. It is true that this "freedom from want" theme is better than any other propaganda approach today, but it is not enough *in itself*, without implementation in action, to arouse any real popular enthusiasm. The Charter was as much a propaganda failure as the Fourteen Points were successful.

Only some form of democratic socialism could inaugurate the age of worldwide plenty now so freely, even frantically, promised us, in different ways, by Hitler and Roosevelt, Goebbels and Wallace. But none of these gentlemen harbor any such subversive intentions. After two years of the horrors of the "New Order" in Europe, it is not necessary to labor the point so far as Hitler is concerned. But it is perhaps worth examining just one aspect of the Democratic program: the place of backward, colonial peoples in the post-war world.

In the April issue of *Horizon* Viscount Esher writes, on the "freedom from want" promise in the Charter:

> It is legitimate to wonder how long and how careful was the consideration given by two busy and anxious men to those pregnant words. Did they just think how splendid it would be if all men were free from want?—leaving it to other days and other men to implement their gesture, and build the new order on that golden brick. . . . Yet now that the bright Seraphim have blown their trumpets, and left us with the theme, it is surely our duty to develop its implications upon the minor instruments of thought, practice and experience.
>
> It is not in the national but in the international sphere that the tough problem must emerge. I do not believe that the workingclass of the West have in the least realized that in this sphere they are the rich, and that it is they whose standard of life must be temporarily lowered if freedom from want is to reach the toiling masses of India, China and South America. The English workingman, with his cinema, his dog-racing and his football, protected from birth to death by free milk, free education, health insurance, unemployment insurance, old-age pension; and the

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> American workingman, with his high wages, his motor car and his wireless set, snugly entrenched behind the Hawley-Smoot tariff; are the aristocracy of labor, enjoying a standard of life unknown to the ryot, the coolie and the peon.

The statement that the problem lies "not in the national but in the international sphere" is the reverse of the truth if we are to take the Charter seriously when it proclaims "freedom from want" as the major objective; for then an *internal* reorganization of the economy of each nation along socialist lines presents itself as the first step towards an international order free from want, and the "tough problem" is how to get this internal change. But the Charter is hypocritical in putting freedom from want first. That *first* comes the preservation of the present economic system is shown by its omission of Wilson's Fifth Point, promising justice to colonial peoples. The Charter mentions "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live," but Churchill hastened to make it clear that this applies to peoples subjugated by the Nazis, not by the British. "The joint declaration," he stated in Parliament, "does not qualify in any way the various statements of policy which have been made from time to time about development of constitutional government in India, Burma or any other part of the British Empire." (*N. Y. Times*, Sept. 10, 1941)

Thus Viscount Esher, with refreshing cynicism, makes explicit the concealed assumptions of the Charter, and shows what will have to be done to give the backward lands freedom from want *under the present order*. There is nothing very new in his prognosis; Hobson and Lenin long ago demonstrated that the high living-standard of the British labor aristocracy depended on the exploitation of the Indian and other colonial masses. That this long-familiar axiom should now come as something of a shock, like an obscenity in church, indicates how thick the atmosphere of official optimism and hypocrisy has become.

The picture Esher draws of the English and American workingclasses sacrificing their relatively high standards of living for the benefit of the ryot, the coolie and the peon, is, of course, ironical. Social classes do not behave in any such altruistic fashion. The colonial question is one issue on which, even in formal declarations, the Tories and the British Labor Party present a united front. In the official report on Post-War Reconstruction, drawn up by Dalton, Morrison, Laski and other leading spirits, which was presented to the Party's annual conference a month ago, we read:

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"The colored inhabitants of the crown colonies are not ready for self-government. . . . In all the colonial territory, the primary object of administration must be the well-being, education and development of the inhabitants. . . ." (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune,* Feb. 28, 1942) The same document—which needlessly states that the Labor Party "does not ask for some sudden and over-night transformation of our society"—echoes the Churchill line on India, agreeing that "the full settlement of the complex issues of Indian self-government must await the close of the war."

Sixty years ago Engels wrote:

> You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy? Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as what the bourgeois think. There is no workers party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers merrily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies. (Letter to Kautsky, Sept. 12, 1882; quoted in Lenin's *Imperialism*)

Despite the existence today of the British Labor Party, Engels' analysis still holds. Whatever radical changes come in England will occur independently of *both* the Labor Party and the Conservatives, which are no longer divided on any question of political principle, despite the bright red phrases Professor Laski indefatigably sprinkles through the Labor Party's official programs.

3.

In America, as in England, there is remarkable harmony between the Left and the Right major political parties as to the shape of the post-war world. Wallace counterposes his "Century of the Common Man" to "the American Century." He is referring to the well-known article by Henry R. Luce, publisher of *Time, Life* and *Fortune,* which appeared in *Life* for February 17, 1941. Wallace sincerely thinks there is a sharp clash of policy involved here, as apparently does Luce, judging by the fact that his magazine, *Time,* failed even to mention Wallace's speech. But how basic is the clash, really?

Luce's slogan is: "The Twentieth Century is the American Century." This is rendered in detail as follows:

> In the field of national policy, the fundamental trouble with America has been, and is, that whereas their nation became in the 20th century the most powerful and the most vital nation in the world, nevertheless Americans were unable to accommodate themselves spiritually and practically to that fact. Hence they

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> failed to play their part as a world power—a failure which has had disastrous consequences for themselves and for all mankind. And the cure is this: to accept wholeheartedly our duty and our opportunity as the most powerful and vital nation in the world and in consequence to exert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit. . . .

The most remarkable thing about this perspective is that it should only recently have become clear to American big business. After the last war, the leaders of the Third International expected that the United States would (1) replace England as the leading world imperial power, and (2) dominate the exhausted postwar Europe as the world's most powerful capitalism—"put Europe on rations," in Trotsky's phrase. Yet it was the liberal Wilson who in 1919 had the international point of view, while the Republicans led the successful fight against entry into the League of Nations. (So too, twenty years later, the liberal Roosevelt understood that American capitalism's problems could best be solved on a world scale long before the business community woke up to that fact.) The provincialism of American capitalism is revealed by this strange reluctance to assume the imperial role to which its enormous economic power called it, this inability to see that the League, far from being the philanthropic enterprise which Wilson sincerely believed it to be, was actually a potential instrument for world power. The Bolshevik leaders better understood the interests of American capitalism than the capitalists themselves, just as it was Trotsky who years ago exposed in masterful fashion the fatal weakness in France's position: that her economic weight was insufficient for the political role she was trying to play in Europe against the powerful Germany economy—an insufficiency revealed dramatically in June of 1940. Now, at any rate, Luce recognizes that "In 1918 we had a golden opportunity, an opportunity unprecedented in history, to assume the leadership of the world." He does not propose to make the same mistake twice.

This turn towards imperialism has been accompanied, in Luce's publications, by an increasingly liberal attitude towards domestic matters. In 1937 I published a series of articles in the *Nation* on the Lucepapers showing their strong fascistic tendencies. This was clear enough at the time, and yet their evolution has been since then in the other direction. In this conjunction of imperialism and domestic liberalism, the Lucepapers symbolize the whole recent trend of big business policy.

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The sudden and severe economic collapse in the fall of 1937 meant the end of isolationism as a foreign policy for American capitalism. Little more than a month after the first big stock market break, Roosevelt made his famous "Quarantine the aggressor" speech in Chicago, formally announcing an interventionist foreign policy and the start of a great rearmament program. Hitler, of course, was becoming a real menace to America, and this was the *general* reason for the new policy. But it came when it did because it offered an alternative to Roosevelt's policy of domestic economic reform, which had been buried beneath the wreckage of the "recession." And the implications went far beyond the strategy of the Roosevelt Administration. In 1936 and 1937 the class struggle had become increasingly sharp: Coughlin-Lemke presidential campaign; the "Mohawk Valley Formula"; the great sit-down strikes in rubber and automobiles; the Little Steel strike; Talmadge's "Grass Roots Conference"; the Black Legion, etc. The breakdown of Roosevelt's economic policy in the fall of 1937, coming on top of the Supreme Court fiasco and the breaking of the Little Steel strike, seemed to indicate that the one perspective for American capitalism *within its national boundaries* was an evolution towards fascism. After 1937, however, the more far-sighted members of the business community came to see in Roosevelt's interventionist foreign policy a more desirable alternative: to smash the ever more menacing Nazi imperialism in a second world war, from which the United States would emerge with a world position analagous to England's in the last century. This neo-imperialist perspective implied a liberal domestic policy, partly because an anti-Nazi war could be thus most effectively waged, partly because a victorious American imperialism could afford, as England had, a relatively high standard of living for its own workers at the expense of the rest of the world.

The process of enlightenment was, naturally, a slow one. The business community—and the Republican party—was divided for years on the war issue. International bankers like the House of Morgan saw the light first; industrialists took longer to come around; most backward of all were the farmers, the little businessmen, and the small-town bourgeoisie who make up the Republican rank and file. The conflict reached one climax at the Republican convention in the spring of 1940, when Wall Street, led by the House of Morgan and its allied Lucepapers, was able to nomi-

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nate Willkie instead of the isolationist candidates, Dewey and Taft, favored by the Party rank and file. (The Party's machine bosses, more concerned about their following than about world politics, were almost to a man against Willkie.) Willkie campaigned on a platform which was almost indistinguishable from Roosevelt's both as to foreign policy *and social reform at home.* That summer Roosevelt further signalized the neo-imperialist trend by incorporating in his cabinet at the crucial army and navy posts two right-wing Republicans, Knox and Stimson. The last stand of the still isolationist Republican rank and file, with some big business support, was the America First Committee, which, significantly enough, (1) notably lacked trade union support, and (2) despite the efforts of liberals like Norman Thomas and John T. Flynn, took an increasingly reactionary and even fascist direction. But America First vanished overnight after Pearl Harbor.

This April the Republican National Committee, under pressure from Willkie, formally signalized its conversion to the neo-imperialist doctrine by adopting two resolutions. One declared that the Party must recognize that "after this war the responsibility of the nation will not be circumscribed within the territorial limits of the United States; that our nation has an obligation to assist in bringing about understanding, comity and cooperation among the nations of the world." The other called for an end of the present racial segregation policies in the U. S. armed forces, thus putting the Republicans actually to the left of Roosevelt on the Negro issue. The recent change of editors and editorial policy on the *Saturday Evening Post,* house-organ of the American middle classes, is the latest step in the process.*

4.

There are unquestionably differences between the Lucian and the Wallacian dreams of the post-war world, just as there are between Wallace's Board of Economic Warfare and Hull's State

*The exigencies of conducting the war may reverse this liberal trend. Up to now, organized labor has politically supported the war almost 100% and has voluntarily submitted to considerable State control. Roosevelt's policy has taken this into account. Business, furthermore, has been able to *afford* up to now a fairly liberal policy. As war production eats up more and more of the national income, labor will increasingly feel the economic pinch, and will have to fight harder for its share in the diminishing total product. If the war is prolonged by Allied defeats, Roosevelt and big business may have to meet a disaffected labor movement with openly repressive measures. But if America wins the war and dominates the peace, a liberal home policy would be again *possible*—an "exporting" of fascism, so to speak.

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Department. But on three crucial propositions all official formulators of war aims are agreed:

1. *"Private enterprise" is to be preserved.*

"Mr. Wallace set Hitler's war in its correct historical perspective," commented Dorothy Thompson on Wallace's speech. "Putting the Russian revolution where it belongs, as a step in the struggle of a great people towards fuller consciousness and higher organization, he clearly affirmed his belief in private property as a basic human right." In this reconciliation of the 1917 Revolution and private property, Wallace performs the same kind of miracle that our post-war "planners" do. A recent survey by the Twentieth Century Fund of 102 agencies now engaged in this fascinating occupation showed that: "The desirability of preserving the private enterprise system as the chief component in the American post-war economy is widely taken for granted by both public and private agencies."

Confessing his faith in "a swell world after the war," Milo Perkins, director of the Board of Economic Warfare and Wallace's closest collaborator, recently predicted "a greater future than ever for the capitalistic system." (*N. Y. Herald-Tribune*, May 17) There is a striking similarity between the shape of this "swell world" as seen by Milo Perkins and by Henry Luce. The latter writes, in "The American Century":

> The vision of America as the dynamic leader of world trade has within it the possibilities of such enormous human progress as to stagger the imaginaton. Let us not be staggered by it. Let us rise to its possibilities. . . . We think of Asia as being worth only a few hundred millions a year to us. Actually, in the decades to come, Asia will be worth to us exactly zero—or else four, five, ten billions a year. And the latter are the terms in which we must think, or else confess a pitiful impotence.

Mr. Perkins confesses to no such pitiable state, as reported by the *Tribune:*

> Mr. Perkins advances many arguments in favor of his thesis. He points out the great new market that would be opened by the industrialization of Asia, of India, of Africa. He notes that by increasing the income of the people of Asia alone by one penny a day there would be created a new 4-billion-a-year market. He adds that it staggers comprehension to picture the vast markets that would be established if it were possible to provide the peoples of the world with merely the minimum of food and shelter.

Messrs. Luce and Perkins write as though up to now no one had suspected the existence of this vast potential market in Asia.

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But the great capitalist powers for generations have been struggling to develop this market, just as entrepreneurs have long been aware of the vast internal market for the most elementary necessities of life which exists, also potentially, within the borders of even a rich country like the United States. But the "private enterprise" system, i.e., the profit system, which every one is agreed is to be retained, doesn't permit the worker-producers to be paid enough to buy back the products of their labor. So the Asiatic market is still largely potential; and the New Deal after 1937 finds it necessary to do its social spending on war goods exclusively. Apropos the Luce-Perkins dream of Asia, it is interesting to note that the final effort of the Chamberlain regime to turn Hitler aside from war was the Hudson-Wohltat conversations in August, 1939, in which Britain invited Germany to a joint exploitation, financed by Britain, of . . . China.

Wallace is being equally naive when he announces that after the war "older nations will have the privilege to help younger nations get started on the path to industrialization." Older nations have always had that privilege, and have exercised it freely—at profits of 50% up. "There must be no imperialism," says Wallace, but he does not specify what motive, under private enterprise, will replace the profit spur in this spreading of the blessings of industrialization to the backward regions of the earth.

2. *The post-war world will be "policed" by the United Nations.*

There was considerable to-do in liberal circles when Secretary Knox stated last fall: "It is the hope of the world that sea-power for the next hundred years will reside in the hands of the two great nations that now possess that power, the United States and England." And when the White House endorsed his speech as "representing the views of the Administration." (*Uncensored*, Nov. 8, 1941) But Knox was merely a bit premature in making public this policy. It had been broadly hinted at in point 8 of the Atlantic Charter, which proposed unilateral disarmament, applying only to "nations which threaten aggression.* And of late it has come to be taken as a matter of course. Sumner Welles' recent speech on war aims was evenly divided between endorsement of the Wallace

*Many papers in Germany are said to have used the Charter as *pro-war* propaganda by printing its full text without comment, putting Point 8 in bold type. It is significant that Wilson's Fourteen Points had just the contrary effect behind the enemy lines, playing a major role in weakening the German spirit of resistance.

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"People's Century" line ("The age of imperialism has ended") and promises that the United Nations after the war will maintain "an international police power . . . to insure freedom from fear to peace-loving peoples." (*N. Y. Times*, May 30) The Federation of British Industries simultaneously reached the conclusion that "the post-war world will need policing by an armed force capable of striking at any point without notice."

The last word on the family quarrel between Hull's State Department and Wallace's Board of Economic Warfare was pronounced by the conservative *U. S. News* (June 5): "Both the Hull and Wallace ideas would keep control for some time to come in the hands of the United Nations. In this sense, both seem to imply a moderate and humane type of imperialism."

3. *The post-war world is to be refashioned in the image of America.*

In "The American Century," Henry Luce had described the post-war role of the United States as "the power-house of the ideals of Freedom and Justice," "the elder brother, strong, brave, and above all generous . . . of the nations in the brotherhood of man." He had seen America as a unique historical phenomenon: "Because America alone among the nations of the earth was founded on the ideas and ideals which transcend class and caste and racial and occupational differences, America alone can provide the pattern for the future." And he had summoned his fellow-Americans "to create the first great American Century."

In his "People's Century" speech, Wallace retorted to Luce: "Some have spoken of the American Century. I say that the century on which we are entering—the century which will come into being after this war—can be and must be the century of the common man." These generous sentiments thrilled the liberals since they seemed a repudiation of Luce's embarrasingly frank nationalism. But a month later, on June 9, Wallace made another speech, before a religious body, which he entitled, "Why Did God Make America?" This speech has aroused very little attention in liberal circles, perhaps because in it Wallace joins hands with Luce, and in fact goes him one better. (It is interesting to note that the latent imperialistic content of Wallace's ideology emerges unmistakable when he casts his ideas into wholly religious form.)

"History this far," Wallace begins, "seems to be but the prelude to a magnificent world symphony. In this prelude many

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themes were played. One glorious theme is how the Lord God Jehovah had a special interest in one chosen race, the Jews, in one promised land, Palestine. . . . But the Jews by themselves and Palestine by herself could not build the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. The spiritual essence of Judaism would eventually find its expression here in America. But God held America back, and the Romans destroyed the Jewish nation." The divine election next semed to descend on Rome, but God still held America back. In time, the British Empire arose, but once more the Kingdom of Heaven on earth failed to arrive, and "God still held his hand over America." Finally, like a football coach who reserves his star player to send in for the crucial touchdown in the last quarter, God has given the signal to America, "the heir of the religious concepts of Palestine and the culture of Rome and England." The prelude to the world symphony is finished, and the magnificent opening chords of the major theme are heard. America is about to undertake God's mission of "building in the full sun of a new day for a peace which is not based on imperialistic intervention." Aware of her Manifest Destiny, she is taking up the White Man's Burden. "The American peace will be the peace of the common man."

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A Magazine and Some People in Paris

Allanah Harper

I CANNOT REMEMBER when I first thought of starting a literary review. All I know now is that one must be careful not to make concrete images in the mind. For if one visualizes something one wishes to be or do, in such a way that one sees oneself being or doing it, it is practically certain to happen. I did not know about this trick when, at the age of twenty, I visualized myself sitting at a large desk covered with manuscripts of which I was the sole judge and arbiter, yet without any definite idea of what I was going to do with them. (I cannot conceive of wishing such a thing now.) Two years later, I did find myself sitting at a large desk in my office in the publishing house of Fourcade in the rue de Condé in Paris. But instead of feeling full of smug satisfaction and importance as I had imagined, I was miserable, lonely and inadequate. Old Frenchmen in hitched-up black suits and wobbling pince-nez, looking like caricatures of Léon Blum, came to see me with manuscripts written in a fine French hand, on such subjects as the origin of the French and English races, how they both were of Celtic blood and should therefore be united; others brought long and academic translations of Byron. When I remonstrated and told them that the function of *Echanges* was to introduce living English writers to France, and French writers to England, they went away hurt and disgruntled. I felt stifled in these musty surroundings and soon gave up the office.

My reason for starting *Echanges* was to make known certain English writers to France. No one seemed to have heard of Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Norman Douglas, Edith Sitwell, T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence. The French were obsessed with Rosamond Lehman's *Dusty Answer* and Maurice Baring's *Daphne Adeane*. I do not think many quarterlies have been launched on so little money as *Echanges*. Two friends, one Persian, one Hindu, gave me the money to start the review. The Aga Khan contributed three hundred, Pauline Duleep Singh Torry two hundred pounds; later Princesse Edmond de Polignac gave me five thousand francs, with a promise of another five thousand francs for the next number. And that —about two thousand two hundred dollars—is all the money ever contributed to the review, with the exception of the six hundred yearly subscribers who did not help much. Each number cost about ten to twelve thousand francs to produce. Writers were paid twenty-five francs a page. I hate the word I, and I should like to say *We*, but there was not enough money to employ a secretary; I had to do everything myself. The publisher was hopeless and went bankrupt. I was glad to be rid of him, and

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found a small Russian printer for the 5th number. For the first time, the review was printed on decent paper with good type. The first numbers were abominably printed on the cheapest paper and so full of typographical errors that it was painful to read them. Had I not been foolish enough to sign a contract with the publisher Fourcade, I could have had a well printed review and enough money to have continued it for several more issues.

A few months before the death of *Echanges*, a person from the Quai d'Orsay informed me that if I would advocate a policy of Franco-British Alliance, money for my review would be forthcoming. I was at that time occupied with the idea of a United States of Europe, and would not hear of propaganda advocating military alliances, which I felt convinced only led to further wars. I may have been mistaken as events turned out; however, I did not accept this offer.

The Comtesse de Fels asked M. Chastinet, the editor of the *Temps*, if they would not think it a good idea to finance a review of this kind. After consulting with his colleagues, M. Chastinet shook his head when Marthe de Fels dragged me up to him and said, "Tell her what you have decided." A few weeks later, the *Temps* was bought up by the armament ring; it is now the chief collaborationist organ. I had a lucky escape.

The first number of *Echanges* appeared in December 1929. It contained, among other things, André Gide's translation of *Hamlet;* Virginia Woolf's *Slater's Pins Have No Points*, one of the most exquisite things that great artist has written; an essay on poetry by D. H. Lawrence, called *Chaos in Poetry;* T. S. Eliot's *Introduction to the Method of Paul Valéry;* Gertrude Stein's *Portrait of Picasso*, translated by George Hugnet and Virgil Thompson. There was a long poem by Edith Sitwell; poems by W. H. Davies, Peter Quennell, Tristan Tzara and Eric de Haulville; translations of poems by Rainer Maria Rilke, Emily Bronté; an essay on D. H. Lawrence by Bonamy Dobree; an essay on *Wuthering Heights* by Valentine Dobree; and a fragment of a novel by the Spanish writer Azorin. The following numbers contained, among others, essays by E. M. Forster, Stuart Gilbert on *Ulysees*, a fragment from an unpublished novel by Jean Giono, a story by Stephen Hudson, *L'Inconnue de la Seine* by Jules Supervielle, and some excellent translations of Donne by Auguste Morel, the translator of *Ulysses.* John Donne was so little known in France that Léon Paul Fargue said to me, "I've just read the wonderful poems by Donne, who is this young man? I should like to meet him. I have always wanted to write a poem about a flea that sucked the blood of two lovers." (I had a similar experience with the English poet Brian Howard who, when I mentioned the name of Julien Sorel the hero of *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, said, "Oh yes, I've heard of that young man, what is he like?")

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I wrote to André Gide asking him for a contribution. In answer, I received a note asking me to come and see him at nine o'clock in the morning at his apartment in the rue de Vaneau. I trembled with fear as I

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climbed the narrow stairs to the sixth or seventh floor and hesitated for several minutes before getting up courage to ring the bell. I had strained my eyes, at my French finishing school, reading Gide by candle light, and had written a long and amateurish essay on his writings. I was shown into a hideous apartment, like an oldfashioned dentist's waiting room, except that the walls were covered with paintings by Sickert. After a few minutes André Gide came in; he was dressed in fawn coloured cloth trousers with red silk braid down the leg, and a fawn jacket. I had not expected this *costume d'intérieure.* He rubbed his hands together unctuously, and with a smile full of malice he said, "Mademoiselle, what can I do for you? *Helas!* I cannot speak English." This surprised me from the translator of Shakespeare, Blake and Conrad. I then ventured upon the subject of my visit—would he give me something for the review I was about to publish? "*Malheureusement, je n'ai rien en ce moment.*" Gide seemed to get a sadistic pleasure in being able to say this, like those hotel managers in France whose delight it is to inform one that there is not a room left. I never believe them and I did not believe Gide. I made no gesture of leaving. Then suddenly, after staring piercingly at his victim, he said, "*attendez un instant, je crois que j'ai quelque chose.*" He left me, and I heard him telephoning to a publisher, *Edition de la Tortue.* A long and angry conversation ensued; the publisher evidently did not want to give up a manuscript he was going to publish in a few months in a de luxe edition; but I heard Gide insisting, telling the publisher that he knew better about these things, that it would be excellent publicity for the book. La Tortue gave in after such firmness. Few could have resisted. Gide returned triumphantly, "I have got it for you, my translation of the first act of Hamlet is yours." He went on to say how difficult it was to write in good French without changing the original text and getting too far from Shakespeare. To my mind, the French language has elegance, conciseness and style, but as soon as you try to get beyond the finite, its poverty becomes apparent. The reason why Gide's style has such a charm lies in a trick he has of reversing the order of his adjectives—*le blanc cheval,* for instance, instead of *le cheval blanc.* It is agony to read any French translation of Shakespeare, including Gide's "*chair trop massive, oh! si tu pouvais fondre, t'évaporer, te résoudre en rosée!*" for "oh that this too too solid flesh would melt, thaw and dissolve itself into a dew." One feels like crying, but could anyone do it better? We talked about Sickert and agreed that he was the greatest living English painter. Then, as I left, a curious incident took place. I pushed the lift bell and waited, but the elevator did not appear. I turned round and saw Gide who had been watching me through a narrow opening in the door. He smiled diabolically and said in perfect English, "You cannot go down in the lift, it does not go down."

The next time I saw Gide was at Marie Louise Bousquet's house. He was charming on this occasion, all the formality of the business interview was gone. He said, "*vous voyez comme vous m'avez séduit, je vous ai donné un de mes meilleurs oeuvres.*" The last time I saw him, he was

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lunching alone at the Restaurant Voltaire, where I was lunching with Peter Quennell who was over from London for a few days. I asked him if he would like to meet André Gide, he said of course he would. So I went over and asked Gide if I might introduce an English poet to him, the difficult Gide returned, "*Mademoiselle, qu'est ce que je peux lui dire, je nái rien à lui dire.*" Undaunted, I brought Peter up to him. Of course they got on perfectly, I left them alone to talk. I can see the two faces now, Peter's ethereal profile, and Gide's like a studious monk.

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There is always a certain difficulty in dealing with French intellectuals, and it is above all the difficulty of lack of familiararity—they lack social ease. With the exception of a few Americanised or Anglicised French intellectuals (and there was a certain vogue for imitating American manners and loose clothes among the very young), one always comes up against the *permettez Madame,* and the continual Mademoiselleing, which makes one feel as if one were at a permanent bureaucratic bureau or a genteel tea shop. Underneath the French writer there is always the bourgeois in a suit that is a size too small and the inevitable leather case under his arm. It is practically impossible for a French writer casually to ask you back to his apartment for a drink; he will ask you to meet him in a Cafe, or he will say, "I shall be at home on Monday week." You arrive, and are offered some bad Port in tiny liqueur glasses, with the alternative of some sweet syrup, usually Mirabelle. This is so, because, in a sense, the French still live in the shadow of the eighteenth century, they still sit in small hard chairs, and do not feel completely at home outside the family. Whereas the English intellectual feels at home anywhere and everywhere except in the family circle, where he is bored stiff, and always slightly embarrassed. He has little or no manners, and little respect for anyone. The French boy has more facts crammed into him at the age of twelve, than the English boy knows at the age of eighteen, the result being that the French intellectual is completely cynical and worn out by the time he reaches maturity, and the English equivalent is beginning to grow up and start educating himself when well over thirty, and possesses a kind of eternal youth.

●

I often saw Paul Valéry, who on first sight looked so unlike a poet but rather like a neat little doctor about to visit a rich patient. Only later did one realize that the expression on his face was unlike anything one had seen before. Jacques Emile Blanche has caught it exactly in his portrait of Valéry—his eyes and his slightly open mouth have a look of death about them, as if he had already passed by death and retained something. "*L'Univers n'est qu'un défaut dans la pureté du non-être*"—his poetry has this marble quality, this taste of eternity; and Valéry's mind had this same quality of clarity and silence, even when he was talking in his quick staccato voice, which had a sharp unpleasant sound. I see him now, surrounded by smart women begging him to dine or come to their *jours,* looking in his note book and saying (which was quite true), "I am

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booked for three weeks." Yet outside the salons, gone was the snappy voice and no one could have been more charming. With his extraordinary intelligence he was interested in everything. He adored to talk about the technique of painting, and enjoyed painting himself. I saw a sea-scape of his once; it was dull and academic. It is a curious thing that writers of the first order love to paint pictures of the third or fourth order (think of D. H. Lawrence's paintings, they are badly drawn and the colour is extremely unpleasant).

●

I wrote to James Joyce asking him for a few pages for the first number of *Echanges*. He asked me to come and see him to talk it over. I went to his apartment—it was the first time I saw him—and was shown into a small dark room. For a few minutes I thought I was alone, then the tall, painfully thin figure emerged from a corner of the room. I doubt that he was able to see me, but he knew where I was. He came towards me, frailer than I had imagined; his face had that spiritual quality which near blindness and work of the intensity and concentration, of which he alone in his generation was capable, stamp with solitary unworldliness. Joyce got over the first awkwardness between two people who have not met before by showing me with great pride a volume of Robert Bridges' poems, which the then poet laureate had dedicated to H.M. George V., and in which Bridges had written to Joyce that he (Joyce) had done with words what Bridges had always longed to do. I was touched and surprised that Joyce should have been flattered by Bridges' praise of him, because Bridges was an incredibly dull poet—which makes his paradoxical interest in the innovations of other writers so curious. One remembers how he had encouraged and practically discovered another genius, Gerard Manley Hopkins; how he had translated and included Rimbaud in his anthology, *The Spirit of Man*. This charming old man was unable to do what he wished with words, but he had the insight and generosity to discover and appreciate those who could. Joyce talked to me about Yeats, and about England and Ireland. They would never understand each other, he said.

The next time I saw Joyce was at a dinner at Adrienne Monnier's flat. Adrienne had asked a few people to hear Harold Nicholson speak on James Joyce over the B.B.C. We sat facing the radio—Mr. and Mrs. Joyce, Léon Paul Fargue, Amy and Walter Smart, Sylvia Beach and myself—waiting for the talk to begin, when to our horror a voice said, "We regret to announce that Mr. Harold Nicolson's lecture on Mr. James Joyce will not take place, the censor has placed James Joyce's work under the category of pornography." Joyce turned white, he had particularly looked forward to hearing this lecture on his work. I shall never forget the tense atmosphere that followed, we all felt ashamed at the ignorance and narrowness of the persons whose business it is to control our reading. Joyce was obviously affected by this stupid and humiliating treatment. Fortunately this act of philistinism took place before dinner; our discomfort was alleviated by an excellent dinner cooked by Adrienne herself, I have never before or since seen such a large roast chicken. Fargue teased and

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leg-pulled everyone, particularly Adrienne Monnnier. He was always merciless to blue stocking ladies.

●

The first time I went to tea with Gertrude Stein, at 27 rue de Fleurus, I thought I had never seen a more magnificent head—she looked like the bust of a Roman emperor and, at the same time, like a Buddhist monk. She seemed to take for granted that no one knew anything about painting until they had proved themselves in agreement with her. She showed Amy Nimr and me round her magnificent collection of Picassos in exactly the way as one is shown round a public gallery by a lecturer. "This," she said pointing to a Picasso, "is the Rose period, and this is the Blue period." She ended by showing us the paintings by Francis Rose she had bought. There were about fifteen of them. I found these decadent in feeling and ill-drawn, but Miss Stein said they had a quality of poetry which was what we needed now. I had written a book on modern painting, published by *Cahiers d'Art* in 1928, and Amy Nimr was a painter who knew far more about painting than I did, but we did not say a word and pretended we knew nothing. It was evident that Gertrude Stein enjoyed lecturing.

The last time I saw Gertrude Stein was in London, the summer before the war, at an exhibition of paintings. I had my poodle with me. "Does he like painting?" she asked me, "my poodle always recognizes pictures; he knows a Renoir when he sees one." This was said so matter of factly that there was no possible answer.

●

Ezra Pound must spend a great deal of his time writing letters. During the time I edited *Echanges*, I received sheaves from him. This kind of thing,

"Dear Miss Harper,

A poem by J. G. Macleod has come in. It is remarkable, and the sort of thing that OUGHT to be printed. There are 70 pages of it, but it is divided into 12 parts; each with zodiacal sign ruling; so that it cd. be serialized, three signs at a time in a quarterly. It is not like anything else; and wd. confer character on any review that publ. it. One wd. have to be sure that there wd. be four numbers of the review appearing with fair regularity."

And his comment on the first number,

"Your review finally arrived this a.m. general appearance very good. The charge 'recd. by recent post' that you are i.e. your review is completely plastered over with Bloomsbury wd. I suppose be hard to refute, which doesn't mean that you are foreordained to be damned the Little Review started as reaction against the wildness of another American periodical which it a few years later left hopelessly embedded in past age.

I suppose discrimination will organise itself into a tendency of some sort during the next few issues.

Yours

Ezra Pound."

Needless to say I was unable to publish a poem of seventy pages, or Pound's *How To Read*, equally long. Pound did not like the translation

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of his article into French, so there was no more trouble about it. He wrote to me, "really intolerable language. Times Lit. Sup. all the filth of dead idiom."

After all this correspondence and long manuscripts, I never got what I wanted—a poem by Ezra Pound or a part of the Cantos. In spite of his derivativeness, his false erudition, false virility, and deplorable politics, Pound is a very fine poet, one of the best.

●

Virginia Woolf's beauty was of such rare distinction that it made other people look like cart horses. The curve of her mouth was playfully malicious, essentially aristocratic. She was full of vitality, flatteringly interested in anything that concerned one—what one was doing, what one had read, "tell me about new French novels," "what made you a socialist? I am too, but one must have one's ivory tower as well." The last time I saw her was at a party at Susan Lawrence's, the Labour M.P. Virginia Woolf was dressed like a clergyman's wife at a garden party, with a straw hat pushed on the back of her head. Yet she was the most beautiful woman in the room. She had the style of her own prose: brilliance, wit and vision. I told her that I would rather have written *The Waves* than any novel I knew. "Yes, I liked it," she said. Of the author of a pretentious and rather bogus mystical novel, we were discussing, she said, "He is the spiritual God-child of Mrs. Humphrey Ward." The first time I met Virginia Woolf was at Edith Sitwell's flat in about 1926. Their two profiles, talking together, were unique. Edith Sitwell looked like a legendary figure in a 13th century tapestry, her long Gothic fingers seemed to weave poetry.

●

There is something eminently Victorian about Julien Green and his sister Anne. They lived in a beautiful but essentially nineteenth century apartment looking over the Champs de Mars; the Southern flag hung on the wall, looking rather worn among the paintings by Salvador Dali, Christian Bérard, Tchelitcheff and Berman. Julien Green used to slip in during his sister Anne's teas. He always looked as if he longed to get away and was only waiting for the moment when it was least impolite and least perceptible to return to his own room. His was not the discomfort of André Gide who felt out of place *dans le monde*, but rather the fear of losing the atmosphere of his room which must have been peopled with strange dark dreams—perhaps he would find that one of his characters had disappeared while he was away.

●

I was staying for the weekend at Montmirail, the chateau of the highbrow Edmée de La Rochefoucauld, among the guests was André Maurois. I asked Maurois if he had read Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* which had just appeared. Maurois answered in a superior voice, "I tried to read it but could not go on, I cannot understand it." "If you read it carefully a second time, you will," I said. Maurois was annoyed, "It is not for that reason that one doesn't understand that sort of thing."

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When I went to bed I was kept awake by the noise, at the end of the corridor, of a typewriter and voice dictating far into the night. In the morning I asked my hostess about this industry. She replied with a smile, "It must have been the Maurois's."

●

Lord Alfred Douglas walked into my office one day; he was as surprised to see me as I was to see him. We had not seen each other since he had visited us in my home in the country in England when I was a child. He hoped I would persuade the publisher to take a new book of his on Wilde. Alfred Douglas is a far better poet than Wilde ever was; however, I did not attempt to persuade the publisher—more fulminations against Wilde, I thought, surely everyone has had enough of the sordid old Wilde story. And yet what an astonishing hold it still seems to have on people's curiosity. Cathleen Queensberry and Dolly Wilde (niece of Oscar) were once sitting on the sofa in my studio when a friend, André Germain, came in and, on being introduced, nearly fainted, "It is not possible," he cried, "Lady Queensberry and Miss Wilde together on the same divan!"

●

Paul Eluard was once angry with *Echanges* because I printed an article which disassociated Eluard's poetry from his radical political ideas. Eluard wrote me a long letter, which he asked me to publish in the following number, saying that his poetry and the international revolution were indissolubly married. But there was no following number, because by that time the review had died from lack of funds.

A major scandal, from the point of view of the chief subscribers (who had taken out many subscriptions each and lent me their address books so that their friends could be solicited to take the review), was my book review of Krupskaya's *Memories of Lenin*. From then on, some of these ladies considered me a dangerous, or perhaps only a misguided, Red and cold-shouldered me. Before doing so, Mrs. Reginald Fellowes asked me to a dinner party, where I was put next to the British Military Attaché who, before I had swallowed my first mouthful of soup, attacked me, "I hear that you have written an article praising Lenin, would you like to see the British Empire become like Russia?" I realized then that I had been put next to him so that he should find out my real intentions. Another patron of *Echanges* did not invite me to dinner first, but practically cut me on the next occasion she saw me. She was accompanied by Bernard Fay who is now collaborating in Paris, and who then also ceased inviting me to his apartment. After the issue with the Lenin review, I received charmingly dedicated copies of the lastest works of the surrealists.

Soon after this, I spent a weekend in a country house with Marcel Cachin, the communist senator and editor of *l'Humanité*. No one could have been more gentle and humane than this frail old man (although to these worldly ladies so fearful of losing their possessions, he probably seemed like Moloch). We went for a walk to a farm, Cachin stopped me

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before a swallows' nest under a barn. "Wait," he said, "the mother bird will return in a moment with food, we must not miss that." He invited me to walk with his group in the Fourteenth of July procession and to sit in the stadia afterwards, which I did. We walked for miles at snail's pace round Paris; I shall never forget the faces of friends standing on the pavement as we passed.

●

There were four or five literary and political Salons in Paris—that of the Duchesse de la Rochefaucauld on Wednesday, of the Comtesse de Fels on Monday, the political Salon of the Marquise de Creusol, and, during the time of the rue Boissonade, that of Marie Loiuse Bousquet. (Later, this Salon changed into a kind of annex to the Ritz Bar, rarely did one meet a writer there, only mondaine lounge lizards, ladies dressed in Schiaparelli clothes, painters who frequent ladies of fashion, and dressmakers. I shall not name them because they are all in New York now. I could never quite understand the change in Marie Louise's visitors—from being one of the most interesting Salons, it became a whispering gallery of gossip and intrigue from the moment she moved from the rue Boissonade to the Place du Palais Bourbon.) Princesse Edmond de Polignac received on Fridays, but hers could hardly be called a Salon, her musical parties were one of the really worth while private entertainments in Paris. There one met Stravinsky, Satie, Poulenc, in fact everyone concerned with music. Mme. Edmond de Polignac (born Singer) lived in a palatial house in the avenue Henri Martin, *plus royale que le roi* in her way of living. Most people were terrified of her, but in reality she was terrified of them, shy and always on the defensive, this great lover of music was herself an excellent pianist. The mondaine women and their polished escorts would rather have chatted to each other but they were forced into silence by the severe quick glance of their hostess who would be herself playing one of the pianos in Bach's concerto for three pianos.

The most learned, the most intelligent and the most virtuous of the ladies who held Salons or *jours*, was the Duchesse de la Rochefoucauld. She was the head of the Feminist movement in France, one can hardly call it a Suffragette movement because they refused to manifest in public places or march through the streets. (I gave Mme. de La Rochefoucauld a book on the Feminist movement in England by Christabel Pankhurst. On looking at the illustrations—eggs being thrown at Winston Churchill, and Winston Churchill waving an umbrella at a woman who felt it her right to be able to vote—she said, "*jamais je n'irais dans la rue.*") She hoped to get political equality for women through persuading the ministers and senators who came to her house. Blum was about to do something about it, when the bankers got him out of power. One day she congratulated me on an article I had written in *Activité* against the Armament Ring, "Mademoiselle Schneider (Creusot) will be here in a minute but I shall not tell her that you wrote the article," she said with a smile. Edmée de La Rochefoucauld was a blue stocking who happened to have married a duke;

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she had an exceptional knowledge of history, knew both Latin and Greek, had politics and economics at her finger tips, played the accompaniment to her children's violin lessons, wrote three very modern novels under the pseudonym of Gilbert Mauge, she even painted. She did a portrait of me which I lost. Paul Valéry and Edmée de La Rochefoucauld were always together, she had the greatest admiration for him, having Valéry's classical intelligence. She disliked romantic literature in any form. (I once went to her house after having dined at Marthe Bibesco's where I was asked severely by Abbé Meunier (famous for his conversion of Huysmans) whether I was a classicist or a romanticist in literature; on replying that I liked what was good in either, the Abbé said, "*ici nous sommes sous le signe de Chateaubriand.*" My mentioning the *Memoirs d'Outre Tombe* at the classicist's house was greeted with equal disapproval.)

Marthe de Fels' Salon was half literary and half political. There one met Paul Reynaud, José Laval (Pierre Laval's daughter), Alexis Léger who was also the distinguished poet St. Jean Perse. There I often met Hélène de Portes, Reynaud's mistress, and thought her an insignificant little woman, very bourgeois and as little a femme fatal as could be imagined. She was considered a climber and a bore by most people, but they were afraid of her intrigues and *mauvaise langue*, so after she had pestered them, ended by inviting her. Anna de Noailles often came to Marthe de Fels. She looked like an animated black crow.

●

There was no conscious direction in *Echanges*, no plan other than that of presenting good writing wherever it might be found. However, if one looks for a tendency, it was in a certain quality of poetry that was to be found in the stories, essays and poems published. *Echanges* died like most literary reviews from lack of financial nourishment. Some praised it, many lamented its death, none were willing to sacrifice a little of their money in order that it might go on living.

Coming, next issue:

The World Historians, Turgot to Toynbee—by Karl Korsch

On the Nazi Society: major reviews of Neumann's "Behemoth" and Sweezy's "Structure of the Nazi Economy"—by C. Wright Mills and J. R. Stanwell

The Heiress of All the Ages: a Study of the Heroine in Henry James—by Philip Rahv

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The Story of Stefan George

Eric Russell Bentley

Derleth: Warum geschehen keine grosse Taten? Weil sie keiner *tut!*
George: Nein, weil sie keiner *sieht!*
—From Wolters' *Stefan George.*

Stefan George scheidet die Welt nicht mehr in ihre Lager, aber die Seele in ihre Kräfte.
—Rudolph Borchardt, in 1908.

EARLY IN 1889 Friedrich Nietzsche, hitherto the greatest mind in Europe, left Turin, a mental corpse. Just at this time there entered Turin a young German who was to continue Nietzsche's work, though as yet he did not know it. This was Stefan George, already the author of several volumes of distinguished lyrics. Nietzsche had often hoped to form an elite of young intellectuals. George took up the idea and formed his Circle (Georgekreis). Nietzsche's first editor, Fritz Koegler, was for a time a member. Another Nietzschean, Kurt Breysig, a Berlin professor who had spoken at Nietzsche's funeral, was also a friend of George. In the early years of the twentieth century, the historian of the movement tells us, some members of the Circle studied naturalism, some Tolstoi, some Ibsen. But all, he emphasizes, were bewitched ('hingerissen') by Nietzsche.

The story of Stefan George should be told from the beginning —a formidable task, for at present no complete or concise account is available. The short books on George are hopelessly fragmentary, the long ones—with one exception—non-biographical. The exception is Friedrich Wolters' *Stefan George und die Blätter für die Kunst: deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890.* This preposterous book is the official life. George was no lover of biography, and this book was put out to stifle rumors; Wolters' information, emanating from the Master, as he calls George, was to be regarded as final. His book was to be a life to end lives.

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Wolters wrote close on six hundred large pages of social history without supplying either an index or a detailed table of contents. Since he is not an orderly writer—the rough chronological order of the facts is the reader's only guide—there is no alternative to reading this dull book from cover to cover, compiling one's own index by the way. Wolters is the chief source-book, but an enormous haystack has to be searched for a handful of needles.

All this is by way of apology for the present essay. Nothing like the amount of material is available which the student expects in the case of a twentieth-century writer. Much has been published but little has been said. The most valuable information comes from conversations with Germans now in the United States. One cannot now communicate with Germany, and if one could one would learn as much falsehood as fact. Nevertheless I can claim that this essay presents the story of George for the first time in something like its true proportions. And unlike Wolters' distortion, the true story is not dull.

Stefan George, born in 1868, was the son of an innkeeper at Büdesheim near Bingen. His ancestry was either French or German or Walloon or a mixture, but, unlike many writers on the subject, I am not one to argue these points. The important fact is that while his parents were not rich enough to provide George with an aristocratic home they were not poor enough to deny him a more or less aristocratic education, first at the Realschule at Bingen, later at the Ludwig-Georg Gymnasium at Darmstadt. George's lifelong hatred of the small bourgeoisie (Kleinbürgertum) was a masochistic attempt to flee his own heritage and early environment. The modern philosopher of artistocracy is seldom an aristocrat.

Reverse the values of Kleinbürgertum and you will have the values of Nietzsche and George. Seeking refinement, nobility, and religion, Nietzsche and George were of necessity very lonely men. They yearned for stronger bonds than the love of women. They yearned to lead men and to be led.

Hence George has been thought a supreme egotist. As a boy he sketched a language of his own, and a kingdom. As a man he established himself as a literary dictator. When Herbert Steiner, today editor of the Swiss magazine *Corona,* visited him thirty years ago, George was wearing a toga. The table was covered with ivy. Even George's posture was Roman: he was reclining propped on

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his elbow. The room was sparsely but carefully appointed. The books were few: Plato's *Phaedrus* in Kassner's translation, Shakespeare's sonnets, Goethe's *Winckelmann*. On the wall was a picture of a beautiful boy in the scanty dress of a Greek shepherd.

It is very necessary for the biographer of George to discuss his sexuality. For the doctrine of the New Love—

Das neue heil kommt nur aus neuer liebe—*

is the direct product of a homosexual mind. Whether George (or, for that matter, Walt Whitman who preached the New Love in *Calamus*) would confess to homosexuality is irrelevant except insofar as unconscious homosexuality is subtler in its manifestations than the conscious sort. Naturally there is no longer any question of moral disapproval. But the word *love* is ambiguous, and one likes to know its meaning in a given context.

It may very well be that George seldom thought how unusual was his indifference to women and his passionate attachment to men. He may have considered these attachments in terms of religion and philosophy. Probably his was in the proper sense Platonic love, such love as Socrates felt for Alcibiades. George's choice among Shakespeare's sonnets (those which give weight to Oscar Wilde's theory were published in the *Blätter*) seems to bear this out. So—more obviously—does his choice of the *Phaedrus* among Plato's dialogues. *Winckelmann*—from a literary standpoint—is a more dubious choice, for Winckelmann is the prototype of the schoolmaster dreaming of the ghosts of Greek boys.

The Georgekreis was a *Männerbund*, a group of Platonic philosopher-kings. The group was never closely defined. It was never a club with a definite membership. Ludwig Klages is reported to have said that he was never conscious of belonging to a group at all. George fell in love with him, invited him to write in the magazine, lost interest, and that was all. If this is true, the case of Klages is not wholly characteristic for George was not usually obsessed with the mere bodies of his friends.

George's life from 1898 to 1919 has been properly identified with his magazine *Die Blätter für die Kunst* which appeared in twelve series between those dates. The Georgekreis was his little world, and the record is one of the exits and entrances of the

*"The new salvation comes only from new love."

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members. A list of them is not uninformative. It contains many nonentities, several conscientious scholars, one brilliant critic. It included for a time Hugo von Hofmannsthal, a first-rate poet known to the English-speaking world only for his Strauss libretti such as *Der Rosenkavalier*. That many of the Circle were extremely handsome, Wolters repeatedly testifies. Wolters' pretense that their history is "the intellectual history of Germany" is, of course, monstrous, but it shows how the group thought of itself. The Circle was a closed one. I very seldom find the name of Rilke and never that of Thomas Mann mentioned by any of them.

Die Blätter für die Kunst—its title taken from *Ecrits pour l'Art*—was founded by George and his first recruit (1890), Karl August Klein, chosen by George because, it seems, he was easy to dominate. George's magazine lived twenty-seven years because he allowed no brother near the throne. In 1893 a nucleus had been formed, consisting of Ludwig Klages, Alfred Schuler, Karl Wolfskehl, Leopold Andrian. Wolters mentions also a George Edward who was subsequently a professor in America. Andrian is a Viennese Jew sometimes identified with the decadent school. Wolfskehl, also a Jew, was a somewhat precarious ally of the anti-semitic Schuler and his friend Klages. Schuler was an amazing person full of ancient lore and superstition much of which he believed. He and Klages introduced their comrades to the work of Bachofen, a nineteenth-century anthropologist who found matriarchy to be the first and best state of society. Our three "Cosmiker," as Wolters calls them, discuss Eros and make free with the prefix *ur*. Wolters announces that around 1902 their theories—which attributed primacy to the feminine—proved so offensive to the Master that he broke with two of them. Wolfskehl remained after the purge.

This first Georgean group was composed of men about his own age. Melchior Lechter, who designed the extant editions of George, was indeed three years older than George. But elders and coevals did not provide the inspiration and leadership which George needed. Increasingly he turned to the young. In 1896 a beautiful English boy, Cyril Scott, brilliant and learned beyond his years, entered the Circle. Any Englishman who wishes to judge the extent of Wolters' exaggerations should read the section on Cyril Scott. One would think that this very minor disciple of Debussy was as celebrated in England as Elgar or Delius.

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In 1899 George met Friedrich Gundolf, the one first-rate intellect actually produced by the Circle. This young Jew, whose real name was Gundelfinger, was to George what Sterling was to Carlyle: the unquestioning yet amiable and gifted hero-worshipper. George was *Herrschaft,* Gundolf was *Dienst.* Gundolf wrote many historical studies, and on one occasion revealed what was to him their meaning. He had been drawing for an hour or so on a large piece of paper. Then he said: "Here are the heroes I have written about." The paper showed a series of small portraits—of Caesar, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe and so forth. But the face of each was the face of Stefan George.

Because Gundolf was so completely his creation, George could not find in him what his heart craved. The arrogance which his enemies condemn appears in George's remark when he pointed out Gundolf to Herbert Steiner, then in his 'teens: "Look what I have made of him."

The central event of George's life occurred about the time of the break with the "Cosmiker." This was his meeting with Maximilian Kronberger, a Munich lad who died at the age of sixteen years and one day on April 15, 1904. The boy's name was never disclosed by the Circle because the name Maximin sounded more like a God. (One recalls that Mabel Lodge Luhan called D. H. Lawrence "Lorenzo.") In 1906 a handsome *Maximingedenkbuch,* designed by Melchior Lechter, gave to the Circle the poems of young Kronberger, some by George and his friends, and an eloquent piece of prose by George. I do not know how many copies of the *Gedenkbuch* were printed; I know of only one in the United States. In 1907 appeared George's greatest work, *Der Siebente Ring,* which contains a splendid section entitled *Maximin.* Kronberger had by now become recognised as the God of the new age. It was thought no blasphemy, no hyperbole even, to call him a Christ.

The real identity of Maximin is revealed by his modest literary remains which were privately printed a few years ago (there is no date in the booklet) at Zurich. As Kronberger was walking in the street, a stranger asked leave to sketch his head. Leave was granted, and at a later date the boy discovered that his new acquaintance, Stefan George, was the subject of a book by Ludwig Klages, and a poet. The boy had already composed some verses,

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and the surprising thing is that they deal with the favorite subject of Hölderlin and Nietzsche: the rebirth of manhood out of catastrophe, the victory of semi-divine youth. Henceforth this was George's subject. Here are some lines of Kronberger's which George used as an epigraph for his poem *Die Winke* in *Das Neue Reich:*

> Jezt naht nach tausenden von jahren
> Ein einziger freier augenblick:
> Da brechen endlich alle ketten
> Und aus der weitgeborstnen erde
> Steigt jung und schön ein neuer halbgott auf.*

Kronberger's journal is an unincriminating account of trivial incidents. We have a glimpse of the all-too-human George whom Wolters conceals with his screen of pretentiousness, a moody, unhappy, unstable man, maladjusted to others and perhaps to himself. His moodiness on one occasion resulted in a temporary estrangement from Kronberger; the boy was hurt but uncomprehending. On other occasions there was mutual satisfaction. Once George said: Max, do you believe that there exists a friendship higher than love? And Max answered Yes.

Of George's later life little has yet been written. He lived always in seclusion from the great world, in the company of a few friends. He appears to have possessed little money and yet never to have worked for his living. He had this at least in common with Jesus that he lived on his friends. His name was never in his lifetime bruited among the vulgar, though some of his followers such as Lothar Treuge and Ludwig Derleth sought to give his life-view wider currency. The Master frowned upon these attempts. He died at Locarno in 1933. The last famous photograph of him taken in 1928 shows him obdurate as ever, handsome, ascetic, magnificent.

What was George's attitude to the events of 1914-1933? Progressively he and his friends shifted away from their aestheticism. In fact they claimed never to have been aesthetes but to have avoided both Zola's naturalism and Wilde's aestheticism in their synthesis of the best elements of both. That they avoided naturalism is obvious. That they avoided aestheticism has to be argued

*"Now after thousands of years draws near a single free moment: finally all chains are breaking, and from the earth, burst wide open, rises a new demigod, young and fair."

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by reference to their *Männerbund.* The aesthete is devoted to abstract Beauty, to art for its own sake. George is devoted to manhood, to art for *his* own sake. Art for Art's sake was a religion, but George's religion was different, a strange compound of *Calamus* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra,* a religion of man and, specifically, of Maximin, man, artist, hero, and god.

Sometimes Wolters writes as if George were a social poet, an anti-democratic political leader. Certainly the implications of George's views were all undemocratic. George himself never wrote on politics but Wolters was merely his master's mouthpiece in his frequent sallies against the "modern idols" of technological progress, feminism, populism, permanent peace.

George's philosophy was not that of Hitler and Rosenberg, for he has little to say of race; many of the Circle (Wolfskehl, Morwitz, Gundolf, Kantorowicz) were Jews; so were many friends of the movement like Georg Simmel. If Rosenberg's key-term is Race, George's is the Hero. If Hitler's most individual contribution in *Mein Kampf* is his analysis of propaganda and *Massenpolitik,* George's attitude is total indifference to all such concerns. It is true that he combines a hatred of the masses *qua* mob with a love of them *qua* Volk, but his love of the German Volk, while no Christian charity, was never very exclusive or bloodthirsty.

> Erzvater grub, erzmutter molk
> Das schicksal nährend für ein ganzes volk.*

This is regional love of soil not political love of nation.

But sometimes George was closer to politics. The Messianic Hope of Germany, the expectation of a national awakening out of the spirit of youth, Hölderlin's vision of a German Hellas, was the dominant image of George's life after the death of Kronberger. The Master's changes are reflected in the works of the disciple, Friedrich Gundolf, who turned more and more to the study of Julius Caesar. Younger members of the Circle wrote on Napoleon and Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. In 1924 Gundolf began his biggest historical work with the remark that the crying need of the age was for a Caesar. Wolters made nationalist speeches at the universities. If not a Nazi, was George the leader of a rival anti-democratic movement?

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*"The patriarch delved, the matriarch did her milking, fostering destiny itself for a whole people." (From *Urlandschaft.*)

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Several years before the First World War a petition protesting against the drift to war was signed by intellectuals of England and Germany. Hofmannsthal, as we recently learned from the George-Hofmannsthal correspondence, wrote to George soliciting a signature. George did not answer, but we have the reply which he never mailed. It is sardonic and sad. There was, George said, no such simple method of preventing wars. Wars were the result of a long *but meaningless* drifting on both sides. No botching ("Verklebmittel") was any use. George is closer to the melancholy defeatism of Spengler than to Hitler who, when war was declared in 1914, passionately gave thanks to God.

What were the relations of Stefan George and the Nazis? The question has been much discussed and anti-German fanatics have gone too far. Aurel Kolnai, writing in *The War against the West*, attributes to George the prime responsibility for the invention and dissemination of Nazi philosophy. The truth is that not much is known. There are stories, contradicted by many non-Nazis, that George not only ignored the overtures of Goebbels and Rust, who offered him money and a laureateship, but swore he would never live in Germany after 1933 nor would he be buried there. The truth is that George insulted Goebbels by having a reply sent to him by Morwitz, a Jew. Morwitz told Goebbels that George "did not wish to discuss the boundaries between art and politics."

The Nazi writer, Hans Naumann, dedicated the sixth edition of his book on modern German poetry (1933) to Our Leaders, i.e., Hitler and George. Both, he says, are of German peasant stock, both without wife or kinsfolk, both have the same ideal of race and leadership, both have developed organically in their literary productions, both live for others. Gottfried Benn, often accounted the greatest Nazi man of letters, confirmed Naumann at a writers' conference. A book was written by one Margarete Klein who elaborated the theme. But evidently we have false ideas about Nazi unanimity, for the same year—1938—which produced Miss Klein's book produced a denunciation of George by another Nazi named Hans Rössner. Mr. Rössner correctly observed that the Georgekreis was not Nazi in that (1) George did not understand the philosophy of race; (2) George did not understand the role of woman as creator. (Ludwig Klages scored here and became Nazi

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candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, presumably because he had no taste for peace.)

Rössner made some points which help us to a summing-up from our different standpoint. George, he says, was not the founder of a new humanism, but the last relic of an old order. He was a nineteenth-century decadent who by his strength of will gathered round him the parasites of the West—Jews. Rössner is not hard on George's homosexuality except insofar as it implies misogyny; the strongest argument he advances *à propos* of the Wolters-Gundolf *Jahrbuch für die Geistige Bewegung* (1910-1912) in which there appeared an essay by Berthold Vallentin (a Jew, to Rössner's joy) entitled: Napoleon und die geistige Bewegung. Rössner seizes upon the phrase "geistige Bewegung"—"intellectual history"—and demonstrates that for all their anti-democratic realism the Georgekreis are interested in Napoleon and other heroes only as an influence upon "intellectual history."

This is acute, true, and crucial. George is not, in my view, any sort of a politician; his interest is centered in the intellect and the individual. The only conclusion he draws from the 1918 disaster is that a youth is now more beautiful and brave. He is as unaware of Ludendorff and Ebert as he is of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg. Stefan George's New Empire is of the mind, and any impression we may have to the contrary is due either to our own obtuseness, to George's occasional inconsistency, to the richness in suggestion of his verse which is relevant on so many planes of reality, or to the statements of some of the Circle since George's restraining hand was removed: Ernst Bertram, one of the cleverest of the Circle, is now a prosperous Nazi professor. One should not forget though, that the new day did not dawn for Walfskehl, Morwitz, Kantorowicz and the Jewish section of the Circle. Kantorowicz is in California—not the home of heroic Teutonism—and Morwitz is at Duke University, a seat of learning with an interesting but unheroic history.

In 1909 Wolters called George's proposed empire: das geistige Reich. He was right, and George has himself clarified the issue:

> Dies ist reich des geistes: abglanz
> Meines reiches hof und hain.
> Neugestaltet umgeboren
> Wird hier jeder: ort der wiege
> Heimat bleibt ein märchenklang.

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Durch die sendung durch den segen
Tauscht ihr sippe stand und namen
Väter mütter sind nicht mehr . . .
Aus der sohnschaft der erlosten
Kür ich meine herren der welt.*

The use here of the phrase "herren der welt"—reminiscent of Nietzsche's "Herren der Erde"—helps us to an understanding of Gundolf's remark that Stefan George was the most powerful man in the world.

Stefan George belongs to a group of writers—Thomas Carlyle, Friedrich Nietzsche, D. H. Lawrence are others—who in their study of perfection rejected democracy. All were extreme nonconformists and would have been miserable under any despotism but their own. Carlyle, the earliest of the group, was the most realistic in that he actually approved of existing tyrannies like that of Bismarck. Nietzsche was slightly less realistic for, though he definitely intended his theories to apply to the objective world, he hated Bismarck and all wars which took place in his lifetime. Stefan George and D. H. Lawrence are never closer to politics than literary clubs. Theirs is a sort of fascism of the fancy.

A writer in a recent *Kenyon Review* spoke of the ambivalent heritage of Richard Wagner. The ambivalence is that of Carlyle, Nietzsche, Lawrence, and George. All took up the traditional position of the satirist in a relatively democratic society, viz, the position of devil's advocate. Many of their positions imply the democratic organisation which they end in denouncing. Further, their fervors lay them open to many plausible but unfair charges, for instance, the charge of antiquarianism. For Nietzsche, Lawrence, and George (as for T. S. Eliot and W. B. Yeats, also enemies of democracy) the past is a symbol of present potentiality. Their denunciation of the modern world is a denunciation of ever-present vulgarity and failure; their hope for the future is not Malraux's hope for a revolutionary change in the human condition but the old faith in the superior few. Like Plato, Stefan George left few instructions for the realisation of his ideals.

*"This is an empire of the spirit: reflected light [i.e. reflected from George] is the court and sacred grove of *my* realm. Here every man is reborn in a new shape; the place of his birth and his homeland are now but a tinkling sound out of a fairy tale. Because you have found a mission in life, because you are consecrated, you change kin, rank, and name. Mothers and fathers are no more. From the brotherhood [literally, 'sonship'] of the men of destiny, I choose my world rulers." (From *Der Stern des Bundes.*)

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The Irish Setter

Karl Warndorf

I MET HIM on the Cornich in Marseille. He was a poor and homeless dog and I was a refugee, that is a poor and homeless human being.

The Cornich is a superbly constructed road that cuts into the Roucas Blanc, as the last ridges of the Alps are called in Provencal. Supported by massive stone walls it runs across the viaducts that span the canyons the sea has eaten into the rocks. On top and on the slopes of these rocks are the villas of the rich who settled here attracted by the beauty of the scenery. The Cornich closely follows the winding of the shore line, extending into the bay with it, and receding again as it cuts inland. At each turn of the road you thus enjoy a constantly varying view of the city and the bay. The white rocks glittering in the sun, the azure sky, the cliffs, which in the distance appear to be another and steeper shore, the islands scattered over the harbor, and beyond them the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Palm trees growing among pines and maples, groves of wild oleanders, evergreens, and cacti. The poor wretch from Northern Germany who gazes at the rich colors and breathes the mild air filled with the fragrance of blossoms will feel his heart throb.

But the poor wretch must not allow himself to become so entranced by the beauty of nature as to forget that he came to Marseille "to get his papers fixed" and that he has, in order to accomplish this, to appear punctually at the various offices and stand in line to wait his turn. Patiently he must stay there for hours on end, although he may be ready to cave in, lest he lose his chance of escaping from the European scrapheap. Wait he must before he obtains the overseas visas, i.e. until the Americans agree to let him in; wait he must before he obtains the *permis de sortir*, i.e. until the French agree to let him out. And even after this ordeal is over and he has written proof that they agreed and proof that his passage was paid he can't hurry off, but must wait again until he can show proof that reservations have been made for him on this or that liner sailing on such and such a date and, after having been able to show that, continue to wait for the Spanish and Portuguese transit visas, i.e. until the authorities of Spain and Portugal agree to let him pass. And this they'll not do without hearing from headquarters of the international police in Madrid and Lisbon that no objections would be raised against his departure.

In the weeks that I spent waiting for my Spanish and Portuguese transit visas I went to the shore below the Cornich and took a swim in the bay almost every morning and sometimes also in the afternoon. Even a refugee could afford to go to the beach, because it cost nothing. My pleasure,

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however, was soon spoiled by the Petain government which stepped in and issued a decree declaring that it would henceforth be strictly prohibited to take off or put on one's clothes in places that could be seen from the Cornich. Nobody on the Cornich could *help* seeing everyone on the beach.

Since it could neither better the food situation nor cope with the problem of rising prices, the Petain government made every effort to show its efficiency in other things. In the whole unoccupied area the police force was doubled, in Marseille it was tripled. To find jobs for so many new men was no mean task. In Marseille some of them were assigned to uphold the authority of the law on the bathing beach.

Completely ignoring the new ruling, the Marseillants stuck to the habit of shedding their clothes on the shore before diving into the water and made it plain that they would apply force and violence in the event of any assault on their liberties. Finding it impossible to break the stiff resistance of their compatriots, the police devoted their attention to the refugees, who had no rights. To discriminate however, between real Frenchmen and undesirable aliens among people in bathing suits and trunks required a keenness of eye which the cops lacked. The undesirable aliens, moreover, considered it wise not to break the new ruling for they knew that for them to violate it implied the danger of being thrown into prison and of losing all chance of leaving France. The officers of the law, therefore, were playing a losing game. Often they picked a culprit who met force with force and told them to go to hell. Discouraged they walked off to be reassured of their worth by their comrades across the road, to whom was entrusted the important task of seeing that the Gestapo and the Italian spies who had taken up quarters in the nearby villas shouldn't get lost.

It was in the days of unrestricted freedom, before the police appeared on the beach, that I met the dog, a brown Irish setter, with white and yellow spots on his chest. He was chasing the gulls on the beach and barking at them. I saw at first nothing strange in this, but when the gulls had flown away I noticed that he ate the algae and crabs and clams that they had left on the sand. A rather outlandish habit for a dog I thought. My curiosity was aroused and I decided to study the dog and find out more about him.

Frequent swimming and basking in the sun did me good and I soon felt the release from the physical and mental strain under which I had lived for years. A political refugee who shows signs of increased well being represents a real menace. Sooner or later he's apt to fall into his old line of thought again. A short breathing spell in the manhunt makes him bold and inclined to say more vigorously than ever that we live in a crazy world and must do something to change it.

Why, he may even become convinced that he is still strong enough to put up a fight against this crazy world himself.

From these subversive ideas my attention was distracted, however, by the interest I took in the dog. This interest led me to the study of a problem which is considered to be asolutely innocuous, and which has occupied

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the minds of men of great learning and respectability, men who can be sure to obtain at any time, should need arise, a clean bill of political health. I refer to the very controversial problem of whether animals are guided by instinct alone or also possess reason.

In working on this problem I applied strictly scientific methods: It was a definitely established fact that my dog exhibited traits which were alien to his species. These traits had, as far as I was able to ascertain, not been noticed in any other dog in or near Marseille. The fishermen I queried looked at me in astonishment. I could see that these good people thought I was a little cracked. No sane person would ask whether they had ever seen any dogs eating seafood. Marseille dogs, they said, ate, like all dogs, meat and not gulls' food. And if they chased gulls, they merely did it for fun. There was nothing strange for me in the attitude of these fishermen. Other people had frequently reacted similarly when I brought up questions and suspected me of being slightly off. Had I not raised any questions and thus aroused suspicion, I would not be a refugee.

Proceeding from what was known to what was unknown to me, I continued to study the dog and compared the results of my observations with those of the researches made by others. I read all available books and publications dealing with the subject in question. Carefully I weighed the value of one theory as against that of another, without becoming, however, learned enough myself to make an attempt at combining the positive elements of the conflicting theories, ideas, and points of view into a synthesis or higher union of all. In other words: in spite of my serious interest in the problem I haven't succeeded in contributing anything to its solution. Realizing, finally, that a purely psychological approach would not get me to the root of the problem at hand, I abandoned my theoretical studies and extended my researches into another field where I can claim to have made a few discoveries.

One day I had gone to the shore and taken a swim without having eaten anything before leaving. As I sat there hungry on the beach, I felt the stirrings of very strange instincts in me. I immediately thought of my dog. And addressing myself to him who sat near me, I said: "Now I believe I know that you adopted a diet which is unworthy of a good dog like you because you are starved. Am I not right?" In answer to this he drew closer and looked at me as one who would say, "You said it."

Following the same line of thought, I arrived step by step at a very definite conclusion: This was a stray dog. His master had left him. People tried to get rid of their dogs because they had nothing to feed them. Stray refugees catch stray dogs and eat their meat. My dog was in too reduced a state to be found tempting even by those fellows. My dog took to eating the crabs and clams he could catch from the gulls. This is how the acute shortage of food affects men and animals. To say that both, men and animals, were—under existing circumstances—forced to adopt habits which we thought belonged to a state of things we'd overcome, merely meant stating a fact.

This fact has, it is true, no direct bearing on the problem as to

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whether the dog was urged to do what he did by instinct or something which is more than instinct. Clear recognition of this fact would, however, make us realize the tremendous possibilities which exist for the re-establishment of a new and more primitive order. In the fascist countries, they have succeeded in coming down to the state of barbarism, but there's no reason to believe that we'll remain in that state for a thousand years. Judging from how quickly humanity has come down the first steps, I think we have a good prospect of moving backwards much more rapidly. According to Haeckel's law, our species worked itself up from below passing through all stages in the evolution of the animal world before coming out on top. Now the trend is definitely in the opposite direction. Downward from above. Refraining from answering the question of in how short a time we might arrive at the state of the link between man and ape, I venture to say that we will, if we hurry, be beyond it soon and become reptiles before long.

Intricate problems such as the question of at what stage of the evolutionary process living creatures begin to show signs of possessing reason and a soul might be solved empirically as we are regressing. We would only have to watch and see how quickly all signs of both are lost.

My poor dog looked worse every day. His fur was shaggy and soiled. One could count his ribs and the other bones under his skin. His lips drooped forming what seemed like bags near the corners of his mouth and exposing his lower teeth and jawbones. His tail seemed to have lost all connection with his body and to perform little uncontrolled movements of its own. His eyes were mostly closed. When he opened them they had an abnormally bright gleam which dulled and soon disappeared completely. And yet, although he was a pitiful sight, he showed that he had once been beautiful. He neither snapped nor barked nor growled when people kicked him with their feet. This meekness often reminded me of that of the human beings who suffer tortures at the hands of others and never think of hitting them back. I thought he was a canine Tolstoian. Sometimes I called him Severing, the name of the man who permitted the Nazis to kick him out without dealing them a single blow.

The waiter on the Prado Terrace chased my dog away when guests arrived. As little as a year ago, the dog had come there frequently with his master. In those days the guests admired and petted the dog and the waiter gave the well-fed animal morsels of meat and cake, for which kindness he received an extra tip. Nobody could, at that time, have dared to chase out the dog without meeting with the strong disapproval of everybody who was present.

What determines our so-called aesthetic sense? Why do human beings feel drawn to beautiful and well-nourished creatures and recoil from those who look worn and hungry? Do *they* act *rationally?* Or do they merely follow the promptings of their instinct?

Many of the refugees in France went out peddling cheap stationery, pencils and ties—although they knew that peddling without a license was punishable and involved imprisonment or expulsion or both. Some of

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these people were tried for embezzlement of funds and found guilty because they had used their "capital" to buy themselves food. What led these people to behave so unreasonably, to forget what the consequences of their actions would be? The "capital" of one of these poor devils consisted of one hundred and fifty francs. What prompted the rich fellow—also a refugee—who reported him to the authorities to act as he did? Reason, or instinct?

The German refugees in France were Hitler's foes. Many of them supported the war policy of the French government. At the outbreak of the war against Nazi Germany the French government, however, threw these anti-Nazi Germans into concentration camps. And the French ruling classed helped to bring about the defeat of their own government and appointed Petain, who is but a French Hacha, as the head of the state.

Were the French top rulers in doing this following the dictates of reason or their instincts? Their instincts, which told them that it was safer to play into the hands of their class brethren across the Rhine than to rely on any support from below. They knew how to adapt themselves to a new situation.

My poor dog had, unlike them, no ability to adjust himself to the Nazi order. He couldn't get used to eating merely what the sea swept ashore, and so he died. I admit that toward the end I had something to do with this. But what I did for him does not alter the fact that he perished because he couldn't take things as they are.

I had tried in vain to get some left-overs for my dog in the kitchen where they feed the refugees. These lowest of the low *unter-menshen* would never leave a scrap. They swallowed everything, hook, line, and sinker. Some of them became quite a threat to the native botanists who got up early in the morning to study the contents of the garbage can, and who now began complaining how unfair it was to permit foreigners to compete with them. A starving dog could expect the gulls to leave something for him, but not those greedy fellows. What I could spare myself was too little to sustain him.

For several days I had not been able to go to the shore, for I was kept busy running around to get the Spanish and Portuguese transit visas and to straighten out other matters. When I saw my dog again he was so weak that he collapsed three times before he succeeded in coming near me. I thought it was time for him to put an end to his suffering and told him so. He drew as close as possible to me and listened attentively, looking very grave. I suggested that he should go along swimming with me into the deep water and there descend to where the fattest crabs are. I also explained that I couldn't go with him the whole way, for I wanted to help in bringing about the fall of my beloved Füehrer. He consented to following my advice, "Allons." And he came after me a few steps to where the water was shallow. Lifting my dog and holding him on my chest I swam far out on my back and then I said turning around, "Here I see a fat crab," and he quickly went after it.

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Books

THE REWARDS OF PATIENCE

Poems and New Poems. By Louise Bogan. Scribners. $2.50

"Genius has only an immanent teleology, it develops itself, and while developing itself this self-development projects itself as its work. Genius is therefor in no sense inactive, and works within itself perhaps harder than ten business men, but none of its achievements have any exterior telos. This is at once the humanity and the pride of genius; the humanity lies in the fact that it does not define itself teleologically in relation to other men, as though there were any one who needed it; its pride lies in the fact that it immanently relates itself to itself. It is modest of the nightingale not to require anyone to listen to it; but it is also proud of the nightingale not to care whether anyone listens to it or not. . . . The honored public, the domineering masses, wish genius to express that it exists for their sake; they only see one side of the dialectic of genius, take offence at its pride, and do not see that the same thing is also modesty and humility."

So wrote Kierkegaard in 1847; he did not foresee that by 1942 the masses would have acquired such buying power that genius itself would, in many cases, be thinking of its self-development as a process of learning how to sell itself competitively to the public, that the poet whose true song, unlike that of the nightingale, continually changes because he himself changes, would be tempted to dissociate his song from his nature altogether, until the changes in the latter come to be conditioned, not by changes in himself, but by the shifting of public taste—that he would become, in other words, a journalist.

A public is a disintegrated community. A community is a society of rational beings united by a common tie in virtue of the things that they all love; a public is a crowd of lost beings united only negatively in virtue of the things that they severally fear, among which one of the greatest is the fear of being responsible as a rational being for one's individual self-development. Hence, wherever there is a public, there arises the paradox of a tremendous demand for art in the abstract, but an almost complete repudiation of art in the concrete. A demand because works of art can indeed help people along the road of self-development, and the public feels more helpless than ever; a repudiation because art can only help those who help themselves. It can suggest directions in which people may look if they will; it cannot give them eyes or wills, but it is just these eyes and wills that the public demand, and hope to buy with money and applause.

Subjectively, the situation of the poet is no less difficult. In ages when there was such a thing as a community, the self-development of which his works are the manifestation, arose, in part at least, out of his life as a

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member, assenting or dissenting, of and within that community; in an age when there is only a public, his self-development receives no such extraneous help, so that, unless he replaces it by taking over the task of directing his life by his own deliberate intention, his growth and hence his poetry is at the mercy of personal accidents, love-affairs, illnesses, bereavements, and so forth.

Again it was in the community that he formerly found a source of value outside himself, and unless he now can replace this vanished source by another, or at least search for it, his only standard for appreciating experience is The Interesting, which in practice means his childhood and his sex-life, so that he escapes being a journalist who fawns on the public only to become a journalist who fawns on his own ego; the selection and treatment of experience is still conditioned by its news value. In the case of much 'advanced' poetry, the public is therefore, though quite unjustifiably, quite right in repudiating it; not because, as the public thinks, it is too difficult, but because, once one has learned the idiom, it is too easy; one can translate it immediately and without loss of meaning into the language of the Daily Press. Far from being what it claims to be, and is rejected by the public for being,

The Shrieking heaven lifted over men

it is, what the public demands but finds elsewhere in much better brands,

The dumb earth wherein they set their graves

A volume of good poetry, like this collection of Miss Louise Bogan's, represents today therefore a double victory, over the Collective Self and over the Private Self. As her epigraph she uses a quotation from Rilke—

Wie ist das klein womit wir ringen,
was mit uns ringt, wie ist das gross

And the poems that follow are the fruit of such a belief, held and practised over years, that Self-development is a process of self-surrender, for it is the Self that demands the exclusive attention of all experiences, but offers none in return.

The playthings of the young
Get broken in the play,
Get broken, as they should.

In the early sections Miss Bogan employs her gift in the way in which, as a rule, it should at first be employed, to understand her weakness to which it is dialectically related, for wherever there is a gift, of whatever kind, there is also a guilty secret, a thorn in the flesh and the first successful poems of young poets are usually a catharsis of resentment.

Cry song, cry
And hear your crying lost

Poems at this stage are usually short, made up of magical lyric phrases which seems to rise involuntarily to the consciousness, and their composition is attended by great excitement, a feeling of being inspired.

Some excellent poets, like Houseman and Emily Dickinson, never get beyond this stage, because the more successful the catharsis, the more dread there must be of any change either in one's life or one's art, for a

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change in the former threatens the source of the latter which is one's only consolation, and the latter can only change by ceasing to console. Miss Bogan, however, recognised this temptation and resisted it.

My mouth, perhaps, may learn one thing too well,
My body hear no echo save its own,
Yet will the desperate mind, maddened and proud,
Seek out the storm, escape the bitter spell.

But the price and privilege of growth is that the temptation resisted is replaced by a worse one. No sooner does the mind seek to escape the bitter spell than the lying Tempter whispers—

The intellect of man is forced to choose
Perfection of the life or of the work

The poet who escapes from the error of believing that the relation of his life to his work is a direct one, that the second is the mirror image of the first, now falls into the error of denying that there need be any relation at all, into believing that the poetry can develop autonomously, provided that the poet can find it a convenient Myth. For the Myth is a set of values and ideas which are impersonal and so break the one-one relationship of poetry to experience by providing other standards of importance than the personally interesting, while at the same time it is not a religion, that is to say, it does not have to be believed in real life, with all the effort and suffering which that implies.

Thus we find modern poets asking of a general idea, not Is It True?, but Is It Exciting? Is It Poetically useful?, and whether they are attracted to Byzantium and The Phases of the Moon, like Yeats, or to the Id or Miss History like his younger and less-talented colleagues, the motive and its motions are the same.

But the escape from the Self without the surrender of the Self is, of course, an illusion, for it is the Self that still chooses the particular avenue of escape. Thus Yeats, the romantic rebel against the Darwinian Myth of his childhood with its belief in The Machine and Automatic Progress, adopts as poetic 'organisers' woozy doctrines like The Aristocratic Mask and The Cyclical Theory of Time while remaining personally, as Eliot rather slyly remarks, 'a very sane man'; others fashion an image out of the opposites of puritanical parents or upper class education. And still the personal note appears, only now in the form of its denial, in a certain phoney dramatisation, a 'camp' of impersonality. Further the adoption of a belief which one does not really hold as a means of integrating experience poetically, while it may produce fine poems, limits their meaning to the immediate context; it creates Occasional poems lacking any resonance beyond their frame. (Cf., for example Yeats' *Second Coming* with Eliot's *East Coker*).

To have developed to the point where this temptation is real, and then to resist it, is to realise that the relation of Life to Work is dialectical, a change in the one presupposes and demands a change in the other, and that belief and behaviour have a similar relation, that is to say, that beliefs

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are religious or nothing, and a religion cannot be got out of books or by a sudden vision, but can only be realised by living it. And to see this is to see that one's poetic development must be restrained from rushing ahead of oneself while at the same time one's self-development must not be allowed to fall behind.

Reading through Miss Bogan's book, one realizes what is the price and the reward for such a discipline.

The hasty reader hardly notices any development; the subject matter and form show no spectacular change: he thinks—"Miss Bogan. O yes, a nice writer of lyrics, but all these women poets, you know, slight. Only one string to their bow." It is only by reading and rereading that one comes to appreciate the steady growth of wisdom and technical mastery, the persistent elimination of the consolations of stoicism and every other kind of poetic theatre, the achievement of an objectivity about personal experience which is sought by many but found only by the few who dare face the Furies.

You who know what we love, but drive us to know it;
You with your whips and shrieks, bearer of truth and of solitude;
You who give, unlike men, to expiation your mercy.

Dropping the scourge when at last the scourged advances to meet it,
You, when the hunted turns, no longer remain the hunter
But stand silent and wait, at last returning his gaze.

Beautiful now as a child whose hair, wet with rage and tears
Clings to its face. And now I may look upon you,
Having once met your eyes. You lie in sleep and forget me.
Alone and strong in my peace, I look upon you in yours.

In the last two sections, in poems like *Animal, Vegetable and Mineral* and *Evening in the Sanitarium* Miss Bogan turns to impersonal subjects, and here again the hasty will say: "too slight. I prefer her earlier work," because he cannot understand the integrity of an artist who will not rush her sensibility, knowing that no difficulty can be cheated without incurring punishment.

But the difficulty of being an artist in an age when one has to live everything for oneself, has its compensations. It is, for the strong, a joy to know that now there are no longer any places of refuge in which one can lie down in comfort, that one must go on or go under, live dangerously or not at all.

It is therefor impossible today to predict the future of any poet because the future is never the consequence of a single decision but is continually created by a process of choice in which temptation and opportunity are perpetually presented, ever fresh and ever unforseen. All one can say is that Miss Bogan is a poet in whom, because she is so clearly aware of this, one has complete faith as to her instinct for direction and her endurance, and that, anyway, what she has already written is of permanent value. Future generations will, of course, be as foolish as ours,

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but their follies like our own and those of every generation will mainly effect their judgment of their present which is always so much more 'interesting' than the silly old past.

Miss Bogan, I fancy, is then going to be paid the respect she deserves when many, including myself, I fear, of those who now have a certain news value, are going to catch it. W. H. AUDEN

ALL FINGERS AND NO HANDS

The Grand Piano; or, the Almanac of Alienation. By Paul Goodman. Colt Press. $2.50.

"I trust," says the author, "that certain readers will enjoy a pleasure appropriate to mine. I trust there is nothing fundamentally unobjectionable." Modest aims, not difficult of fulfillment if one is clever. But here the fulfillment falls not quite flat. Except for the delightful hero, a brat named Horatio Alger, this novel is overcast by an irritating inadequacy. It contains brilliant inventions, piquant comments, neat phrases: "Horace was neither an adolescent nor an adult and therefore he did not have to unmake his entire life every time he had to make a sensible judgment." "The toasters that cast their bread on high and ring the joyous bell." "In the dead of spring." Many such plums, but the cake?

The plot is delectable. A fabulously wealthy man, a Volpone *à la* Hearst, whose home is a freight-station of art objects, sends a grand piano to the Algers, a family living on relief. The Alger girl is absorbing the affections of the man his daughter loves; by the devious psychological routes Goodman delights in, this and other things lead the miser to get her in trouble with the relief authorities. Various other alienations and enterprises are affected at long or short range by this sly gift: a Society for the Protection of Vice, a literary movement called Bombism, an interview with a draft board, a visit to the opera, a dash of incest, etc. In the end, disgusted with his centrifugal offspring, the miser decides to make little Horatio his heir. While Horatio's elder brother is playing the piano in a contest for its ownership he is arrested by the draft authorities. The narrative ends as Horatio, who has learned to his grief that the enterprises of life "day by day let one down to flat conclusions," wires the B-flat below middle C to an explosive.

This is all very engaging, but hardly a "comedy of humors," as the author calls it, citing Ben Jonson, of all people. Rather—also in his own term—it is a "sociological abstraction," as "arid and schematic" as he feels life itself to be nowadays. This sounds imposing in a preface, but it turns out to mean that the tale itself is too willed for comedy, too volatile for satire, too sad for extravaganza. Attacking on all these fronts, it breaks through in none. It has a dream's absurd logic, but not its corporality. The author seems to be playing a cat-and-mouse game with styles and attitudes, constantly intruding to quote the Right People from Anacreon to

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Proust, or his own poems, or refer archly to his other works—anything for *panache:* Cocteau's sleight-of-hand without his poetry. Like an over-elaborate joke, the entertainment misses fire: the characters have point, the incidents have point, the story has not. "No foundation," as the old fellow mutters in Saroyan—"no foundation, all along the line."

FRANK JONES

AN AMERICAN LIFE

Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs. Harcourt Brace. $3.75.

Unlike most, perhaps all other reviewers of *Sherwood Anderson's Memoirs,* I have to confess almost complete ignorance of the author's fiction, poetry and plays. I have never read *Winesburg, Ohio,* or *Tar,* or *Dark Laughter,* or any of the other works which made Anderson famous. My knowledge of him and of his talent must be based on this one book. That is a handicap. Perhaps it is also an advantage.

My reason for not having read Anderson may be worth mentioning. My interest in his writing was checked long ago by a phrase—very commonly echoed in England at that time: "Sherwood Anderson is the American D. H. Lawrence." It was a stupid, convenient, superficial comparison. The two men do not really resemble each other, except, to some extent, in their choice of subject-matter; but they do both owe a great debt to Whitman, and this accounts for a similarity, not of style but of tone. Both could be chatty, extraordinarily readable; both could create an unforgettably vivid moment, a scene, an action, a gesture; both could thunder forth prophetic utterances in the *Also Sprach* manner, (but here Lawrence was much the louder and funnier of the two).

So, if we are to play at labels, let us say rather: Sherwood Anderson is the American Sherwood Anderson. All writers, of course, are conditioned by their national backgrounds; but Anderson, to judge from this book, was aware of his to the point of obsession. Everything is referred back to it, blamed on it, credited to it. Maybe only the British Isles could have produced Lawrence, but, as one thinks of him—sitting under a tree in Mexico and talking to a bird, or mocking the Italian fascists, or thrusting his aggressive beard at the Australian moon—he does not seem specially British, or specially anything. He was nobody's child. Anderson, one feels, took Ohio with him wherever he went—even to Paris.

In Paris, Gertrude Stein paid him one of the most wonderful compliments I have ever heard: "You sometimes write what is the most important thing of all to be able to write, passionate and innocent sentences." Reading the opening chapters of this book, the childhood chapters, I think I see what she meant. It was passages of this quality, perhaps, which made some critics accuse Anderson of imitating Tchekhov and Turgenev. It would be truer to say simply that his descriptions of children and adolescents—like those of the great Russians, and unlike ninety-nine percent of all other such descriptions—do not appear to be sentimentalized, brutalized, or otherwise faked.

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Anderson—as everyone except myself presumably knew long ago—began his adult career in advertising:

> All the time I had a kind of pride in my ability as a word slinger and most people who buy house paint are, like the people who are sold anything else, at bottom probably yaps. I was plausible, thought faster than most people, was always putting others in the wrong.
>
> You readers must know what this means in America, this being plausible—a ready salesman. In America no one buys anything. In America everything, even art, is sold to people.

These two extracts are characteristic of Anderson's attitude to the American scene and his own moral and artistic evolution. Like the rest of his generation, he bites the apple of quick-profit industrialism and is banished from the rural economic Eden; he descends into the capitalist inferno, fries there a while, repents, enters purgatory (the poor section of Chicago), suffers and finally ascends into paradise (the free, declassed life of the artist who is neither out for the big money nor afraid of moderate poverty). I employ this symbolism because Anderson insists on it. Throughout, he is calling our attention to what he is representing: the Typical American Country Boy, the Typical American Business Man, the Typical Free American Artist. How he enjoys himself! How he revels in each new role, and how he makes us enjoy it—although, or perhaps because, his performance wouldn't fool a child of six! Typical Business Man indeed! Typical American! Typical anything! "I was plausible . . ." there speaks the unregenerate individualist, delighting in his ability to fill one more part, to get himself accepted as a regular guy, a "live one," with whom you could "cut a watermelon." But this disingenuousness, this gay unashamed trickness is very appealing; it is the most attractive thing about the Anderson revealed to me by this book.

He died without having quite completed the *Memoirs:* some of the last sections, we are told, had not been revised. Is it fair to his memory to quote from them? Yes, I think so. The man I have imagined for myself as I read these pages would have been quite capable of saying: "It is because I am so very male that I can be a real lover of women," and of asking: "Has any man of my time approached me in richness of living?" As he speaks, the Anderson of my imagination is watching me out of the corner of his eye, to see how I'll take it. And "Oh, come off it, Sherwood!" I exclaim: "You don't have to be that way with me. I'm a limey." Anderson looks quickly round the room, but nobody has heard my stage whisper: they are all too busy taking notes. He clears his throat: "Has any man of my time—" he begins again; then he glances suddenly in my direction—and winks.

Was he really like that? I hope so. I am going to try to find out. Anderson's *Memoirs* have sent at least one reader to his work; and that is largely what an autobiography is for.

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

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FROM UNDER THE LID

Auf den Marmorklippen ("On the Marble Cliffs"). By Ernst Junger. Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt (Hamburg). 1940

One of the leading spokesmen of the disillusioned middle-class youth who played so great a part in Hitler's victory over the Weimar Republic was Ernst Junger. As a young officer, he had found comradeship and a social ideal in the trenches of the last war. Returning to the confusion and sordidness of postwar Germany, Junger, like many another ex-soldier, idealized war, martial heroism, soldierly discipline. His books bore such titles as *Fighting as an Inner Experience* and *Storm of Steel: an Officer's Diary*. In his book, *The Worker* (1932), he wrote: "We are proud to confess we were 'bad citizens'." And: "The great achievements of 'Progress' lack contact with primal forces. . . . In war, however, human beings become 'noble beasts of prey'." *Soldatentum*, the official journal of military psychology, called Junger in 1938 "the perfect type of modern warrior," whose style is "the quintessence of contemporary martial spirit." Junger's stirring phrases, his romantic transfiguration of war, these had taken root in the spirits of many of the young Nazi soldiers who fought with such fanatic bravery in France in 1940.

Years ago, Junger expressed the hope that among other soldierly virtues of the Third Reich there would arise "the employment of a precise, unambiguous language, a mathematically factual style." His hopes have not materialized, to say the least. If this could not be achieved, however, then he predicted that censorship would be useless, that it would, in fact, merely encourage "the subtilization and malice of the individualistic style." As though to demonstrate personally this last observation, Junger published last year a strange romantic novel called "On the Marble Cliffs," which is a bitter satire on Nazism in thinly veiled allegorical terms—and which has had a remarkable popular success in Germany.

In *Auf den Marmorklippen*, the reader is transplanted into a world of fable, in which names and geographical features of every region and every age, legend and history, the real and the unreal are all mixed together. Primitive and civilized peoples live side by side, army generals and demons sit at the same table. As in the works of the German Romantics, an agitated dream atmosphere dominates the book. The strange names remind you of the Klingsohr fable in Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*.

High above the marble cliffs live two friends, former army officers, who came here after a lost war. Below lies the Burgundian countryside—cities and well-tilled fields. In back of the cliffs there live a wild shepherd people, rude in their ways, but hospitable to strangers. Debtors threatened with prison, young lovers, half-pay officers take refuge with them, and also literati who in their disillusionment with civilization imitate the shepherds' songs. (The reader may remember that people such as these made up Hitler's party.)

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Further back begin the forests and marshes and the domain of the Chief Forester. "He was one of those figures that are looked upon as great lords, and yet at the same time are felt to be a little ridiculous." The friends pass many nights with him. His eyes gleam with a terrible joviality. "Like those of old drinkers, they were inflamed by a red mist, yet there was also in them an expression of cunning and of unshakeable strength." At that time his company was pleasant to the friends. But soon a profound threat to their whole Apollonian way of life issues from him. He rules the woods and the marshes, into which he begins to send his hunters, who are "*wie aus Kot gebacken;*" literally: as though made out of excrement, i.e. cruel, desperate and inhuman. As a kind of illegal, self-appointed police, they commit all sorts of outrages. After them come the foresters, who seem to be re-surveying the land; these roam over fields tilled for ages as though they were barren plains, having no regard to roads and boundaries. To him "who hated the plow, the wheat, the vine and the tame animal, and to whom the bright hearth and a frank and open way of life were repugnant," it was not a question of ruling over this plenty. "His heart was only gladdened when moss and ivy grew over ruined cities and bats fluttered in the moonlight in the cracked vaults of cathedrals. . . . He was cloaked in fear, and I am convinced that the secret of his strength was to be found in that far more than in himself. He was only effective when things began to tremble of their own accord."

And could any symbolism be clearer than this: "A master stroke of the Chief Forester was precisely this: that he administered fear in small doses, which he gradually increased, and the aim of which was to paralyze the opposition. The role he played in these disorders was that of a force on the side of order; while his more lowly agents sat in the councils of the shepherds, sowing anarchy, his intiates penetrated into the courts and official places, even into the cloisters, and were there regarded as forceful personalities who would subdue and yolk the rabble. Thus the Chief Forester was like an evil doctor who encourages an ailment only in order to inflict upon his patient an operation he has in mind."

The disciplined hordes of this demon overpower the leaderless shepherds and the unwarlike city-dwellers. The description of the horrible struggle reminds one of the war of the gods in the Edda with its agonized end-of-the-world mood. Here too the old world collapses. Everything burns. In the distance the old, beautiful cities flame up in destruction. The friends flee and, as their ship leaves the shore, there resounds in their ears the song of the people behind them:

"Because no help from man can come,
God is the help we call upon."

How did this savage and despairing allegory ever see the light of day in the Germany of 1940? Why was it allowed to be sold widely? Was the censor unable to see through the veil of fantasy? Was Junger's name sufficient guarantee? Is the author still alive? None of these questions can we answer. We are only witnesses of the collapse of a great illusion.

WERNER BLOCH

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IN ALL DIRECTIONS

New Directions, 1941. New Directions, Norfolk, Conn. $3.50

When I finished *New Directions* I felt angry and amused and helpless. It is a sort of encyclopedic contradiction in red sackcloth: *The Boyg Rides Again*, they might have called it. It commences with seven pages of Notes on Contributors, written by an anonymous Goody Two-Shoes who rattles like Mr. Laughlin—nobody else errs with the same aura of optimistic benevolence. The Notes announce, among other things, that Kafka's famous parable from *The Trial* has never before been translated into English, and then *print* it (Knopf's suit for infringement of copyright should be instructive); kill off Roger Roughton in the Spanish revolution; and explain that the Italian government, by putting pressure on "close dependents," is forcing the unwilling Ezra Pound to broadcast fascist propaganda. (I suppose Major Douglas got him to advocate Social Credit by kidnapping Homer Shakespeare Pound.) But these are nothing; as Kipling says, "It was the tone, man! the tone!"

Brecht's long play is an episodic thieves' pastoral which presents the Thirty Years' War in terms of a wandering sutler: "Tilly's victory at Leipsic costs Mother Courage four officers' shirts." Mother Courage (the part is obviously intended for Hattie MacDonald) has a son named Swiss-cheese: the whole play's soul is contracted into that name. The play is a kind of anti-historical romance, a *Mother Horse-Sense's Progress;* the methodical collision of history and horse-sense resulted, so far as I was concerned, in the complete triumph of history. *Mother Courage* tastes like a raw potato: good, but crude and simple and special case; and I feel like Feuerbach, when it comes to living on potatoes. But even potatoes show to a little advantage by Delmore Schwartz's *Paris and Helen*—self-conscious, self-indulgent, a literary and embarrassing failure. No character does anything without lengthily explaining what he is doing, preferably in some famous writer's words; the Dramatist then explains why the character has done it, and what it all means, and why the famous writer's language is better than *his* could ever be; then the Producer does a little commenting of his own; and the Audience does I don't know what—the author has unaccountably forgotten to say. This is not complex, just diffuse—the literary equivalent of washing your hands fifty times a day; it is a commentary on a commentary on a commentary. It is a real grief to see so good a writer (the most promising extensive poet of the time) wasted on this; his essay on modern poetry, later in the book, is sensible and interesting. *Paris and Helen* is dedicated to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; Universal would have done.

Georg Karl Friedrich Mann's *Azeff Wischmeier, the Bolshevik Bureaucrat* reads like a James Joyce-S. J. Perelman parody of the Encyclopedia Brittanica; its 108 pages are a Russian Joke to end all Russian Jokes.

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Mr. Mann, a great deal of the time, is a wonderfully funny writer; but there is something wonderfully humorless about his methodical and remorseless extravagance—the reader, blind and bleeding in these graceless toils, finds it hard to remember that the machine which is destroying him is, after all, funny.

Half the stories are heavily influenced by Kafka, who by now has become a non-naturalistic convention at everyone's disposal; used badly enough, it is as dreary and unimaginative as naturalism. Roger Roughton's plausible and disquieting death-journey is the best of these stories; Miss Eustis and Mr. Gedanken come next, probably. Wright Morris's prose is plain honest neo-primitive stuff, mildly successful; Ben Field's story is as naturalistic as a can of angle-worms; Paul Goodman's stories are witty, indulgent, trivial essays; Julien Gracq's *Chateau d'Argol* is *Ulalume* + Hegel (all uninverted) + *The Castle of Otranto*, done rather nicely—but why? The Swiss de Rougement's fables are pleasanter than his armchair metaphor-mongering about society, which finds a *summum bonum* in—surprise, surprise—Switzerland, that "combination of a resort hotel and a safety-deposit vault." Eve Merriam's parables are pleasant; her scenario for a socially-conscious animated cartoon is almost the crudest piece of writing I've ever seen.

Augment of the Novel is third-rate Pound—prejudice, idiosyncrasy, and reminiscence have almost wrestled free from the protean intelligence that has always burdened them. *Symbols in Portugal* is a sur-realist's amusingly fantastic psychoanalysis. Mr. Calas writes that "what we call solutions of genious are in their essence paranoiac"; so here. André Breton's *Fata Morgana* is Art's answer to nonsense-syllables. Clarence John Laughlin's *Poems of Desolation* are photographs of window-dummies and black lace shawls in graveyards: these represent "the impasse reached in sexual relationships by western civilization," etc. Harry Thornton Moore, "our leading authority on poetry recordings," especially admires Welles' recording of *Macbeth* because "the cauldron hisses when the baboon's blood is poured in, and the toads and snakes that are dropped in can be heard to plop."

Hugh McDiarmid does better in Scots: *The Divided Bird*, a confusion of genres such as you rarely see, reads like the *Critique of Practical Reason* put into excruciating verse by some Erasmus Darwin of the day. But it is, if not refreshingly different, at least different from *A Little Anthology of Contemporary Poetry*, half the poets of which are for any reasonable purposes indistinguishable (even their friends have nicknamed them Comme Ci, Comme Ca). Hugh Chisholm reads like the complete files of *New Verse;* Mr. Brinnin is a competent, faintly American version of this fashion; aand Mr. Kees, in spite of some good touches, is lost there too. Miss Young has a couple of interesting awkwardly written poems; Miss Miles is manner—a clever one—carried to the point where the returns almost stop coming in at all. Mr. Ford is nice words and

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words and words. Nicholas Moore is Thomas-and-water. John Berryman's *Five Political Poems* have lots of Yeats, lots of general politics, a 1939 reissue of *1938,* and a parody of Lord Randall that—but nothing can make me believe that Mr. Berryman wrote this himself, and is not just shielding someone. There is an unpublished section of *The Ghost in the Underblows;* it is exactly like the published sections. For all I can remember of either (I've read both), it *is* one of the published sections. Mr. Fisher is like the gold in sea water: valuable, but in impracticable concentrations. Poetry seems hardly congenial to Mr. Hivnor and Mr. Hays; with Mr. Kaufman congeniality reaches absolute zero. Mr. Laughlin's *What the Pencil Writes* is a modest appealing appraisal. Paul Wren seems unformed, inexperienced, but rather promising. F. T. Prince is represented by five monologues of a Zulu chief; their style is consistent, delicate, fairly original, distinguished by some charmingly innocent alliteration and some surprisingly awkward rhythms; and how can one resist a writer who makes a chief say that he has "called my regiments Decoys,/ Slashes, Gluttons, or else Bees/ Ambushes, Mountains, the Blue Haze"? Rider Haggard was never like this.

I don't know what to say about all the Russian poems. The translations seem reasonably bad; most of the poems are crude but alive, the productions of a culture that still takes poetry for granted, as a necessity. The critical essays are fairly interesting as information. I was charmed by a quotation about a hero who "stepped out of his little tent,/ He washed his fair face/ With spring water cold,/ His face he wiped with a little towel./ As he played on his birch-bark horn,/ The whole people heard him." Guess who? Lenin.

New Directions is a reviewer's nightmare; it's enough punishment to read it all, without writing about it too. It is a queer mediocre hodge-podge in which a few nice and a good many awful things are smothered. Le Petit Chose, in my high school, was always insisting that everything have a *raison d'etre; New Directions* doesn't—or rather, it has one that was dead and unburied ten years ago, like Hoover. Nowadays, seeing people being conscientiously experimental together has the brown period smell of the Masonic ceremonies in *War and Peace;* even Mr. Laughlin and the few Constant Experimenters know that something has happened to experiment—so *New Directions,* especially the experimental sections, gets more conventional every year. (In such matters, it is the first step that counts.) What use is it now, anyway? Maybe Mr. Laughlin could make a magazine out of it; seeing 200 pages four times a year, instead of 800 once, might be bearable quantitatively. Qualitatively I don't know. I sit here with it; it weighs down my lap, it makes my head ache. Think who writes it, who prints it, what it is: what a symbol! Yes, nature is witty.

RANDALL JARRELL

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Better Judgment and "Public Conscience"; A Communication

WHEN I CONSIDER friends of mine going off to the war against their better judgment, I see that with regard to the war, its sanctions and our behavior, it is absurd to look for a personal formula for action other than the next step following from each man's past, just as the society itself has merely taken its next step into the war.[1] Those who concurred in the social ideals, took satisfaction in the social rewards (whether or not they got them) and willingly cooperated in their production, and who adopted as their own coloration the general social style, such men are unlikely to dissent now, unless by a strange ignorance or want of feeling for the horrors long present, they did not realize where they were headed and now undergo a late revulsion. Others who, dissenting from the society, nevertheless thought the people were persuasible to a more or less imminent political change, can now hardly begin to see social values where they saw none before, and where certainly there are fewer to see; in those cases where they hope to work politically, they commit themselves to running certain risks; but where they think the odds are at present too great, they wait—whether inside or outside the army, or whether in an approved social status, makes no difference in principle. No difference in principle precisely because such political personalities are accustomed to subordinate the power of merely personal action, which exerts itself only in the very short or, if inspired, in the very long run; their job thus is rather to find the next mass step to alleviate the disaster.

But those lastly, like myself—and I hope I speak for many educators, artists, and religious persons—who so strongly dissented from the authoritative institutions and mores that they despaired even of political persuasion and pitched their work, their hopes, and their reward in a human, at best future-social rather than present-social, environment,—these, it seems to me, can carry on their work and preserve their freedom to work only in conditions which might involve either (a) civil disobedience or (b) seizing various private opportunities. (This is a group which has never been willing to accept a cleavage between private duty or desire and the kind of brotherhood possible in the immediate political environment, between the primary and secondary environment; but just for this reason it is emboldened, and obliged, in a social catastrophe of such magnitude to make much of private values proved by lifelong testing.)

Let me distinguish (a) and (b) in principle: Those whose lives are given not so much to concrete works as to the purity of their principles

[1]By the war I do not mean something subsequent to the attack on Pearl Harbor, but the activity of decades which has adapted itself with such astonishing smoothness to the present world-wide national unities. It is said that in America "everything is changed," when on the contrary "everything" seems to be coming precisely into its own. And by "our" war I do not mean America's side in the war, but the fact that all peoples have long involved themselves or allowed themselves to become involved.

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and moral agitation and their devotion to the best (I speak especially of moralists and religious persons) have in fact found a worthwhile exemplary device in just standing out against the Goliath of social error, and have embraced public civil disobedience, e.g. by refusing to register. Those on the other hand who sacrifice themselves to free works, living privately for the good of all, have sought just to go their own way, employing such possibilities as they can invent. (By "their own way" I do not necessarily mean in isolation, tho sometimes in isolation, but in the same hole-in-corner institutions as previously.) From both groups, in the nature of the case, you will hear rebellious utterances, tho it is only the first group that can have an interest in their publicity. But the main thing is not to cooperate day by day in the extreme of activity which, when it was more moderate, was day by day avoided.[2]

It cannot be kept too firmly in mind that persons of this kind have always lived in the society more or less as in a state of nature, accepting the social conventions only pro tem and conditionally. And now when the social events have so far deteriorated that life and liberty themselves are in jeopardy, it is their duty, even in violation of social sanctions, to do their best for themselves and their work. So Hobbes taught. But what of the other famous philosophic decision, whereby Socrates accepted the erroneous verdict of the court? He was right to do so, the error was just, in so far as he concurred in the social ideal *as proved by the fact that he did his work in Athens.* In such a case we could not speak of Socrates as "alienated" from the Athenians, but rather as teaching *them.* (I would not refer to such fundamental cases if the issue were not so terribly urgent.)

It is customary to use the term "alienation" and to refer to ourselves as "alienated," and I myself have spoken in this way. Now, however, when the social labor and acquiescence—that prepared the war as if in order to wage it—have so subverted the natural order of goods that one doubts of their sanity; and have frozen into a style that is nausea to the taste;[3] it becomes a kind of flattery to use a term that implies that these also represent a human standpoint from which one withdraws merely to take another human standpoint. *But disaster and intolerable disgust will make us all brothers again.* Until that day those who are a little wiser have an obligation to survive intact! Even if the war were indifferently good, they would have to stand apart from it; there are plenty of others to approve what authority approves. And what if the "total war" is a mistake—and no one is left?

In these tight circumstances the meaning of our persistent *non-commitment* becomes clearer. It is the opposite not of revolutionary faith that holds to its position however the social temper may vary or be manipu-

[2]I hope the reader will see that this attitude is neither callous nor Olympian. Who would dare to assume it if he did not see his friends going to die against their better judgment! And what attitude must we take towards a society that has developed such an estrangement between its grandiose policy and the interests of its members that it cannot rely on their better judgment but must resort to force?

[3]Let me cite a headline from the conservative *N. Y. Herald-Tribune*, June 3, 1942, p. 2: "Bombardiers' View of Essen, No. 2 in the RAF Hit Parade."

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lated; in the long run it is even a form of such faith; but it is the opposite of the attitude of the boys who have been going "all out," once a year, in lecture and signature—on contradictory crusades—as opportunity presents.

I say nothing here about the political nature of the war because I lack the experience and talent of a political person. (My opinions, for what they are worth, I give them only to be ingenuous, are that: Almost all prepared the war by their arduous corporate labor; any considerable group might at some times have prevented it by following at home or against an invader the tactics of Mohandas Gandhi; since no group could control its interests to this extent, the (exploited) masses, who were getting the least rewards and would suffer the worst penalties, might have alleviated the war in their own interests; and since even this recourse is at present in abeyance, it would be best if neither warring side had the opportunity to exploit a victory, if only the peoples by then had a bellyful.) But the point I am here laboring is that the personal action of each man will follow not his opinions but the life that he has in fact been leading. It is unlikely that the behavior I have been describing will be committed by those who have striven to make money or disciplined their time in offices, who have watched the Hollywood movies without puzzlement or worn the usual clothes without discomfort. Each habit has its own judgments, and people will again act out what they have thought or been tricked or compelled into thinking, worthwhile. But what I find contemptible are those who up to a certain time saw only worthlessness in the usual ways, of commercialism, advertising, adolescence, and then the next day were *eager* to be the social spokesmen; how was this possible? Or how does a friend of literature, like John Ransom, dare to write[4]: "The mentality of sensitive and mature writers is such as to oblige them to be citizens as well as artists. There is good evidence that the writers as a group have more of public conscience than other professional groups, not less. They take part in the military effort. Or if they are not wanted here, they take an interest in it; an interest so absorbed that it becomes difficult to manage the detachment, or the innocence, which literary work exacts." Here is a disgracefully careless set of fallacies! Does not the history of great letters show enough men who were willing to be human beings before they agreed, as "citizens," to follow those whom it was their duty to lead? He speaks of the "innocence" of artists as if some other persons, presumably the Office of Facts and Figures, knew better what men ought to do; but they too were once only—writers! (It is curious that during the economic crisis he chastised artists for being too much citizens, when their citizenship was nearer to elementary humanity.) Are artists a "professional group"? Then no doubt they have a public conscience as well as a public face![5] But it is clear that the artists he is referring to have been *hitherto at peace;* they are therefore distracted by the war. I for my part have never heard of such artists! What he calls

[4]"Publication and War," *The Kenyon Review,* Spring 1942, p. 217.

[5]What the devil does he think he means by the "public conscience" of an artist! One would have thought that the essence of "appointing ones-self to be an artist" was to swear allegiance to form, a super-ego of the soul's own creation.

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the detachment of art, which they manage—which they *manage*!!!—is nothing but Victory, not without despondency and madness, in a permanent war.

I am reminded of Schumann who in the days of '48 (*there* was a war!) stole off to another town to escape the firing; and in his "detachment" he wrote—*Manfred*. . . .

New York City
June 1942

PAUL GOODMAN

Letters

ON SOCIALISM

Sirs:

Will you permit me to clarify somewhat my position on socialism, which was left obscure in my article, "Cagliostro and the Charlatan State"? I am profoundly socialist in my convictions and I do not care, especially now, to appear to be on the other side.

An example of true anti-socialist sentiment was shown in this city at the time sugar ration cards were being issued here. At that time the people in the Capitol Hill section, the well-to-do conservative elements, gave the completest and most ugly expression to their bourgeois hatred of Roosevelt and the New Deal . . . insulting and humiliating the state's clerks and revealing throughout their instinctive reaction to anything smacking of socialism. It was a rehearsal of what must inevitably follow in the country if the workers do not put these people where they belong.

Now I am not defending the present capitalistic government of this country. The "socialism" involved in the New Deal is strictly neutral, blood brother to the Mazzianism of certain Italian social reformers. (Mazzini instinctively oriented his ideas toward Rome, i.e., as far away as possible from Milan and Naples, the two capitals of modern Italy.) This point was clearly realized by the Capitol Hill conservatives, and was beautifully expressed in the slogan they shouted at the harassed sugar-ration clerks: "We'll write to Washington!" In the next period it will be: "We'll *march* to Washington!" In other words, the only kind of state socialism they will accede to is a fascist one. . . .

There are many people here who approve of socialism as long as it remains in Russia and in the Post Office, but who view with terror its extension to other fields. I am emphatically not one of these. The chief strength of fascism has been its *socialization* of the defects of capitalism. But that no more causes me to reject socialism than the exploits of the Luftwaffe and the RAF have made me lose sight of what it was the Wright brothers really invented.

EGIDIO MATTINA

READING, PA.

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Sirs:

I have found some of the contents of recent P.R.'s extremely interesting. However, I think on your "Brooks-MacLeish Thesis" symposium, none of your writers really hits the nail on the head. The phenomenon you rightly deplore is the inevitable consequence of the subordination of "Culture" to "Civilization." There is an element of truth, in a debased form, in Brooks's contention, but of course that is no justification whatever for an attack upon modern creative writers. The attack should be delivered upon modern civilization.

The situation in reality is this: with the progressive separation of the outer husk of social relationships from the inner core of personal activity—the mechanical framework of Society from the human Community — creative activity, which is necessarily personal in its origins, finds it impossible to bridge the gap between the private life of the artist and the social life of the public. Private and public values are driven further and further apart, and the artist is forced to cultivate always more deeply his own private personality. With no nexus in society, no lighthouse to steer by, he has to find his pole-star in himself. If he ceases to do this, and throws aside his personal integrity (as he will increasingly tend to do if his work begins to be popular) in favour of exterior, social stand-

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ards, he vulgarizes and debases his work. Thus, instead of having today artists who are also public men, as, to some extent, were Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, Goethe, etc., combining both personal and social elements in their own personality, we have a fissure between the two, on the one hand our Rilkes, Joyces, Eliots, and on the other our Wellses, Priestleys, Sinclair Lewises and the like.

The problem of art, as P.R. so rightly recognizes, cannot be considered in isolation from the problem of society. Moreover, we do not need a change in art, which would be suicide, but a change in society. This is, of course, in process of occurring. While it is doing so, it is the job of the artist to stick to his guns, not to compromise with society. My own belief is that eventually the outer structure of society will be brought into subordination to the human community, human values will everywhere permeate all living, the fissure between private and public, personal and social, will be healed to some extent. This is more, however, than a literary matter. Meanwhile, perhaps Henry Miller's contribution to your symposium is the most relevant!

D. S. SAVAGE

DRY DRAYTON, ENGLAND

MYSTICISM AND YOGI-BOGEY

Sirs:

I find in Richard V. Chase's review of Aldous Huxley's *Grey Eminence*, in your recent number, this astonishing phrase: . . . "Some of the current aberrations of the bourgeois mind, such as religious mysticism, for instance."

The book is open to criticism, but no book can be properly examined without a better knowledge of its subject-matter than is indicated by this quotation and other comments in the article.

When I was young it was not unusual in the United States to hear "cultivated" people laugh at the arts. I have lived to see a change in this respect. For example substitute *musical experience* for *religious mysticism* in the above quotation and its absurdity is evident, but 40 years ago I assure you that to many people such would not have been the case. Yet religious mysticism has lived longer in human records than music, and has certainly been dignified by as serious study. Perhaps 40 years hence PARTISAN REVIEW will hesitate, whatever its bias, to print as unscholarly and uninformed an article as that which calls itself Yogi-Bogey.

E. SPACKMAN

LENOX, MASS.

LETTER FROM A PRIEST

Sirs:

As a fairly regular English reader of your paper during the past two or three years I should have liked to answer the Questionnaire you issued a while back. But I was afraid that my reply would not reach you in time to be of any use to you. And in any case what I should have wanted to say could not appropriately have been 'Procrustinated' into the narrow bed of a tabulated question-sheet. But at least it would have assured you that there was more than one priest, in England at any rate, to be counted among your readers. Indeed not only does my copy go round to several others; but you are the subject of fairly frequent (usually quarterly) discussion in a 'Comment on Literary Periodicals' which appears in the Anglican monthly journal '*Theology*' (obtainable also from S.P.C.K. in New York).

Speaking for such theologically-minded readers I should have said that we welcome your literary and critical articles and reviews (such as the papers on Hawthorne and MacLeish) in their insistence on quality and integrity above political or other bias. We find the political articles (editorials, etc.) sometimes bafflingly unrealistic, but at least the rather desperate Trotskyism is an attempt to be honest.

But I should also have asked whether you could not sometimes find room to give some indication how deeply — or otherwise — the work of theological philosophers and sociologists has impressed the American mind. I can remember one article on Maritain which dealt ably enough with superficial inconsistencies; and one review of Eliot (Trilling on the 'Idea of a Christian Society') which did brilliantly reveal the American reaction. But such occasions are rare, in spite of the number of books that have appeared in recent years from such minds as Reinhold Niebuhr (whose Gifford Lectures you are perhaps going to review), Paul

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Tillich, Maritain, Berdayev, Christopher Dawson, Eliot, or even Karl Barth. An odd list, I admit—yet, whatever their presuppositions, more considerable than many of the second-rate political philosophers and publicists who do obtain notice.

Now you doubtless have to consider your audience: and it is clear that these matters are not of interest to them—else they would have asked for them as I am doing. But the significance of this is worth pondering. It is understandable that, with your haphazard and largely accidental religious background in the U.S., theological issues should seem irrelevant—should not *connect* with anything in your intellectual experience. (Though it is interesting to find the *Southern Review* more aware of these concerns: presumably the difference in tradition between New York and Louisiana has something to do with this.) For you—at least for you of the North—most churches are bound to seem either eccentric sects (whether it be the Episcopal Church as the plutocrat's hobby, or the Foursquare Gospel as the store-keeper's fad) or else a piece of undiscarded furniture brought over in the travelling rug by refugees (the Roman Catholic Church). With that scale of relativity it must be difficult to take seriously anything in the nature of fundamental theological discussion.

Well, I suppose we have had that feeling too. And yet we—I mean a certain minority, though a growing one, among intellectuals—have now begun to find in such writers as Eliot, or in the rediscovery of such past minds as Kierkegaard, a deliverance from the parochialism of the secular apologists. We find the naturalism of such as Dewey curiously full of a timid superstition; and the study of anthropology, with all its insight into the theologico-cultural traditions of nations, makes the works of many self-confidently agnostic thinkers appear now surprisingly narrow and insular. And thus the way seems to be opening to re-admit the psychological perceptiveness of Pascal or Augustine, as well as the living traditions and liturgies of historic religions. (It was the virtue of D. H. Lawrence to have realised that the superficiality of any society is revealed by its contempt for *liturgy*.)

Nobody would pretend that we are clear yet how this will connect with the practical problems—political, international, scientific, educational, sociological—which face ourselves as well as you. And our problems, since we are more directly heirs of a European Catholic Christian tradition, now barely recognisable to outsiders but not obliterated, will be different from yours. But in so far as all these problems concern the same subject—the human being—we are prepared at least to expect a relevance which may have yet to be fully discovered. So at any rate we do not side-track any of them. I am writing to ask whether you are prepared to be equally inclusive?

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A CORRECTION

Sirs:

I wish to correct a typographical error in my reply to Max Eastman. The correct title of Dr. Paul Schilder's book is *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*.

May I also add that, as submitted to me for reply, Mr. Eastman's letter was headed, "*An Open Letter to James T. Farrell*," and that for this reason I addressed my reply not to Mr. Eastman but to the editors of PARTISAN REVIEW.

JAMES T. FARRELL

NEW YORK CITY

A CORRECTION

Several lines were omitted from the translation of Kafka's *Josephine, the Songstress*, which appeared in the last number of PARTISAN REVIEW. Beginning with "and" in the twelfth line on page 214, the text should read thus, with the tense in the last two lines of the paragraph changed to the subjunctive:

> "and perhaps, as it seems to me at least, hardly even exceeds the ordinary limits of squeaking—nay, perhaps her powers do not even suffice for the ordinary squeaking which any common laborer can produce without effort all day long at his work—if all this is true, then Josephine's so-called artistry would be disproved, but there would still remain to be explained the enigma of her great success, and it would be all the more an enigma." C. G.

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